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I, Margaret Lehman, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Literacy and Second Language Studies.

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Student Interactions, Attitudes and Engagement During Literacy Events in a Second Grade Classroom: A Case Study of Five Struggling Readers

Student’s name: Margaret Lehman

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Susan Watts Taffe, PhD
Committee member: Teresa L. Young, EdD
Committee member: Holly Johnson, PhD
Committee member: Pamela Williamson, PhD

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Margaret A. Lehman
B.S. Bowling Green State University 1999
M.S. Ed. University of Dayton 2002

Committee Chair: Dr. Susan Watts-Taffe
ABSTRACT

This study investigated the student-student interactions, attitudes toward reading and engagement during literacy events in a second grade classroom. The literacy environment and the teacher’s conceptualization of her role as a reading instructor were also part of this investigation. Five second grade struggling readers and their teacher, Miss Beckham, were part of this case study research. The classroom setting was observed for 36 mornings and 11 afternoons during the language arts, science, and social studies content classes during eight weeks of the 2010-2011 school year. Inductive analysis was used to analyze the field note, and student and teacher interview data. Metaphor analysis was used to further analyze the teacher interview data.

Analysis revealed three themes within this data set, which are literacy environment and the teacher’s influence, perceptions and attitude about reading and learning to read, and the when and why of student engagement. The theme of literacy environment and the teacher’s influence included an explanation of the physical environment, the routines of the classroom, and teacher actions that impacted the environments within the classroom. The students’ and teachers’ perceptions were explored using informal and formal interviews, which were guided by classroom observations. These interviews revealed a disconnect between the teacher’s views of the importance of student-student interactions and the students’ views of when and how often they were allowed to interact with their classmates about reading. The final theme of the when and why of student engagement was explored through classroom observation, and informal and formal student and teacher interviews. This data showed how constricting and confusing teacher expectations can be for students. Although the physical environment of sitting in groups and classroom routines like working in centers during the reading portion of the day, the teacher’s
actions did not encourage interactions as much as her formal interview revealed she believed she did.

Implications for teacher preparation and professional development, teacher practice, school districts, and parents were discussed. Some suggestions for teacher preparation and professional development include helping pre-service and in-service teachers understand the importance of student-student interactions, the effect of the literacy environment on students learning, and the significance of content are reading in the primary classroom. Suggestions for teacher practice include promoting and explicitly teaching children how to interact appropriately through explicit instruction and guidance as well as reflecting on one’s own practice using a variety of methods to explore whether actual classroom practice aligns with personal views of what good practice entails. In order to promote student-student interactions in the classroom setting, school districts need to allocate resources, revise curriculum, and provide teachers with the needed support to make the needed changes that support student-student interactions. Suggestions for parents include interacting with their child while reading a book together and promoting positive attitudes towards reading in the home environment.

Suggestions for further research include additional research on student-student interactions within classrooms that are highly interactional so that we can learn how teachers incorporate allowing students to interact with each other regularly into their everyday teaching routine. There is also a need for further research on student attitude towards reading and how that attitude plays out in the classroom setting, including looking at students of varying ability levels. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, generalizations cannot be drawn, but practitioners and researchers can gain further understanding of how students learn and interact in the classroom setting.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of three wonderful women who have passed through my life, and taught me a lot about life and how to live.

To Margaret Patricia Magoto Steele and Anna Marie Weis Lehman - my grandmothers after whom I was named (Margaret Anna) who taught me about the importance of showing kindness to others and never giving up despite the difficulties and hard times that life passes along.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Reading is a transactional process of making meaning from text. It involves the interplay of the reader’s existing knowledge, the information contained in the text, and the context of the reading situation (Rosenblatt, 1994). Students bring a large variety of literacy knowledge and skills with them to reading events. Students do not enter schools as empty slates; their prior experiences and background knowledge provide the foundation that supports their learning. This leads to some students having advantages over others (Heath, 1983). A student’s prior knowledge and experiences greatly affects how well he or she will be able to comprehend and make meaning from a text. The content of the text itself also affects a reader’s comprehension and stance toward a text. If the text contains vocabulary that is unknown to the reader, then he/she may struggle with making meaning and forming connections to the text. The context of the reading event also greatly affects how a reader acts and makes meaning from the text. If a reader is reading a text for enjoyment, then he or she may act differently than if he/she is reading the text in preparation for a social studies test. All of these factors, including a students’ prior knowledge and home literacy experiences, the information that a text contains, vocabulary knowledge, and the context of the literacy event work to help a reader comprehend the text, which is, after all, the point of reading a text.

Some readers may experience difficulty in comprehending what they have read when the interplay among the reader’s existing knowledge, the information contained in the text, and the context of the reading situation breaks down. This breakdown may result from difficulty in decoding words, having the vocabulary to understand the text, or many other reasons that lead students to struggle. Students who experience this breakdown on a regular basis are often
referred to as struggling readers. Mathes et al. (2005) stated that 5-7% of students do not successfully meet grade-level reading standards in the primary grades. Because reading and learning to read is so difficult for students who struggle, they often do not voluntarily read on their own. This is unfortunate since voluntary reading has been linked to reading achievement (Brozo, Shiel & Topping, 2007; Guthrie, 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). A student’s feelings toward reading or attitude also affects whether a child chooses to read or to avoid reading altogether. A lack of reading engagement has been shown to negatively impact reading achievement (Brozo, Shiel & Topping, 2007). It is reasonable to assume excitement toward reading is contagious and students who are engaged and excited tend to engage in positive interactions with peers about their reading experience.

Current studies on students’ reading attitudes rely heavily on self-reported data. Although self-reported data have proven to be useful in learning more about student attitudes towards reading, there is a need to examine this topic in an in-depth manner from the students’ perspective. Furthermore, although research exists on teacher-student interactions (Cazden, 2001; Christoph & Nystrand, 2001; Maher, 2012; Nassaji & Wells, 2000), there is a dearth of research on student-student interactions during normal classroom activities. The need for more research on how students interact with one another during normal classroom activities leads to the purpose of this study. This study investigated students’ interactions, attitudes toward reading, and engagement in literacy activities in a second grade classroom. An attempt was made to fill the void in the present research by exploring student-student interactions during all literacy-related classroom activities, to examine the classroom literacy environment as a whole, and to provide a more holistic picture of students’ attitudes by moving away from self-reported data and observing within the classroom setting.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of student interactions within literacy events in a second grade classroom through the use of case study methodology. This study explored students’ attitudes towards reading, their engagement in literacy activities, and their peer interactions. I observed literacy activities throughout time devoted to the language arts instruction as well as content area instruction in science and social studies. This study also investigated how one second grade teacher viewed her role as a reading instructor and how she influenced the student interactions that occurred during structured literacy events throughout the school day. The following questions guided my study:

1. What is the nature of student interactions within literacy events for struggling readers in a second grade classroom?
2. How does the literacy environment influence the struggling readers’ attitudes toward, engagement in, and avoidance of reading in this classroom?
3. How does the teacher conceptualize her role as a reading instructor?
4. In what ways does the teacher influence the student interactions during structured literacy-related events throughout the school day?
5. How do the students conceptualize what it means to be a good reader and how their teacher helps them become better readers?

Underlying Assumptions

This research was based on several assumptions about learning, teachers and the classroom environment. First, learning to read and reading in general is an active and social process. In order to create engaged, motivated and productive readers, teachers need to allow them to talk and interact with each other at various points of the reading process. Students need
the opportunity to think about, process, and discuss what they are reading in order to fully understand and comprehend what they are reading, as well as, to derive more enjoyment from it (Schmidt, 2008).

Another assumption in this research is that the overall classroom environment has a large impact on student learning. Cambourne (2000) explains that there are three overarching aspects of a classroom literacy environment. The first is the physical set-up of the classroom space. Book shelves full of appropriate and interesting books, and desks arranged in groups, are more likely to promote engagement in the reading process than shelves of old, worn books and desks sitting in rows. The human behaviors of the teacher and students also have a huge impact on the literacy learning of students. A supportive teacher who highly values reading and encourages reading in many ways will produce more successful readers than the teacher who worries about following the reading program to its fullest extent (Allington, 2002; Turner, Applegate, & Applegate, 2009). The classroom routines and procedures also have a large impact on the literacy environment as a whole. Making sure that students understand what to do when they finish work and allowing time for them to choose books to read has a greater impact on student literacy development than providing worksheets to occupy every moment of their day (Allington, 2002; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998).

Finally, a teacher’s attitude towards reading and her role as a reading instructor affects how she teaches her students to read and affects how they view reading in general. If a teacher has a poor attitude towards reading, then she may pass that attitude on to her students and conversely, if a teacher has a good attitude towards reading, enjoys reading and shares this view
with her students, then she will hopefully pass that attitude and enjoyment of reading onto her students (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Nathanson, Pruslow & Levitt, 2008).

**Key Terms**

**Reading Process**

There are several factors involved when an individual reads a text. Because reading is a transactional process of making meaning from text, a reader’s existing knowledge, the information contained in the text, and the context of the reading situation (Rosenblatt, 1994) all come into play while reading is occurring.

**Struggling Reader**

A struggling reader is a person who has difficulties with the transactional process of reading described above. Some of these difficulties may be related to decoding and fluency while others may be related to comprehending what was read when no decoding issues were noticed. Generally, a struggling reader is a student who is achieving below grade level and does not make adequate yearly progress, especially when he/she is compared to his/her peers in the same classroom. For the purpose of this study, a struggling reader is a student who receives additional help outside of the classroom setting for one of these issues.

**Classroom Interactions**

The term classroom interactions refers to all of the interactions that occur within a classroom, including teacher-student interactions and student-student interactions (Cazden, 2001). The majority of the classroom discourse research has focused on teacher-student interactions (Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Christoph & Nystrand, 2001; Cazden, 2001; Fisher, 2005; Poole, 2008) while few studies have investigated student-student interactions (Almasi, 1995; Cazden, 2001; McIntyre, Kyle & Moore, 2006).
Student Interactions

Student interactions refer to all interactions that a student may have with others throughout the school day. Cazden (2001) explained a great deal about the various kinds of interactions in which students partake, including teacher-student interactions in the common whole-class Initiation-Response-Feedback format or within a small-group format, such as guided reading groups. Further, Cazden described how peer interactions are also an important part of a student’s literacy learning.

Literacy Events

Barton and Hamilton (2000) described literacy events as “activities where literacy has a role. Usually there is a written text, or texts, central to the activity and there may be talk around text” (p. 8). For this research, these literacy events also included activities that occurred outside of the literacy curriculum. The classroom teacher may not even be aware of them. An example would be students reading a book outside of the regular coursework and discussing it with each other. Another example would be reciting rhymes or chants that may be part of things that happen at recess, such as jump rope rhymes.

Literacy Environment

The literacy environment is the atmosphere revolving around literacy that is created within a classroom. According to Cambourne (2000), this environment includes the physical set-up of the classroom, such as the desk arrangement, print on the walls, and availability of books; the human behaviors, such as how the teacher supports the children’s reading behaviors and how the children respond to that support; and the programs and routines that were put in place by the teacher, such as the expectation of what the children should do once they finish an assignment.
Attitude

Alexander and Filler (1976) described a reading attitude as “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (p. 35). Attitude can vary depending on text type as explained by McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995) who stated, “one may have an attitude toward reading science fiction that differs considerably from one’s attitude toward reading romantic fiction” (p. 934).

Theoretical Perspectives

Three inter-related theories make up the theoretical background for this study: Social Constructivism as conceptualized by Vygotsky (1993), Engagement Theory as explained by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), and Motivation Theory as addressed by Winnie and Marx (1989). All three of these theories work to offer insight into the differences in student reading behaviors and achievement.

Social Constructivism

Vygotsky (1993), arguably the father of social constructivism as we know it, operated under the belief that children learn through social interactions with others. Another essential aspect of this theory is that sign systems, such as the alphabet, are an important aspect of growth and development (Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Dixon-Krauss, 1996). Students use the sign system of the alphabet to help them learn how to read. Much of this process of learning to use the alphabetic system to read (and write) is done through social interactions via read-alouds at home and at school, and through discussions at home and at school. Words, sentences, paragraphs, and stories use the sign system of the alphabet, but readers need other environmental knowledge in order to understand a story book. Vygotsky’s emphasis on sign systems also relates to how children learn language skills in the first place. In order to learn how to use oral language, a
child must be part of the culture in which they live and play, and experiment with others as the skill develops. Social interactions affect how a reader comprehends a text, and how he/she constructs knowledge from the reading process.

Another essential aspect of Vygotsky’s theory of social constructivism includes the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the optimal level for a learning task in order to facilitate learning. This is the level at which a child can be successful in learning and experimenting when completing various tasks within a particular setting, such as the classroom. Scaffolding is also an essential part of Vygotsky’s theories. Scaffolding is the assistance that more able peers or possibly the teacher offers a child as he/she is working on a task. Scaffolding usually occurs when a child is working to complete a task that is within his/her zone of proximal development.

As Kim (2001) explained, social constructivism “emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding.” Another important aspect of social constructivism is the knowledge that a student brings to a learning situation. Students do not enter a classroom as a blank slate, and social constructivism, therefore, acknowledges the vast amount of background knowledge that students bring to any learning situation. In a similar vain, Tracey and Morrow (2006) explained the importance of children experiencing communication in various forms such as by watching and interacting with their parents and other caregivers before they begin to independently use communication and language on their own. This learning allows children to learn acceptable ways of talking and communicating with others before they are required to use their skills in more formal situations, such as in school.
As mentioned earlier, social interactions with others are essential to a child’s learning. When participating in problem-solving activities in pairs or small groups, students must collectively work to understand what they have done by discussing and sharing ideas (Jaramillo, 1996). This also means that when teachers create collaborative work experiences for students, then students will work to construct knowledge through cognitive and individual internalization (Powell & Kalina, 2009). It stands to reason, therefore, that a more competent student helping a less competent peer will likely help to improve the less competent child’s abilities.

Watson (2001) shared some important reasons as to why encouraging students to engage in conversations in the classroom setting is a valuable and worthwhile activity. These reasons include:

- Pupils can enrich each other’s learning. They may spark off ideas in each other.
- Explaining to others and justifying their own views are intellectually stimulating experiences.
- Understanding different viewpoints can increase metacognitive awareness
- Learning tolerance and respect for others’ views is an experience in democracy, and enhances social understanding
- Pupils often feel less vulnerable and exposed than in individual working
- This is the ideal and natural context within which to practice and learn social skills which are often relatively undeveloped and without help may prove obstacles in later life and work.
- It is usually more engaging and more fun. (pp. 143-144).

These ideas explicate the importance of allowing and promoting social constructivism in the classroom.
Some examples of social constructivism being actively employed in the classroom setting include: buddy reading and literature circle discussions. In the context of buddy reading, a more able child can be paired with a struggling reader. This pairing allows the struggling child to hear a more competent reader as well as receive assistance from this more competent reader if the need should arise. This pairing also encourages the struggling reader to continue to work harder to be like the more competent child and improve his/her overall reading skills Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley & Stahl, 2004). This example works within Vygotsky’s concepts of working with a child within his/her zone of proximal development and scaffolding. If the competent peer helps the struggling reader decode a word by helping him/her use a strategy such as chunking, then this interaction is even more conducive to helping the struggling child develop better literacy skills. A conversation between the partners about the text being read is also a way that buddy reading helps the children learn through this social interaction Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002). This conversation helps aid in the comprehension and overall understanding of the text being read.

Literature circles are another way that social constructivism can be employed in the literacy classroom. Literature circles are typically student-led groups that read the same book and then discuss the book’s content (Daniels, 1994). The goal of this activity is to aid student comprehension in a motivating and engaging way. Within this learning context, students read a book or part of a book that they have chosen. While reading or shortly after reading, students often gather their thoughts and ideas about the book by writing in a reader response journal. This journal allows the children to record any connections that they made to the reading or other ideas, such as interesting vocabulary words or maybe their favorite part of that portion of the book/story. The students then meet with the other students and discuss their understanding of the
text based on their notes. During this process of discussion, a student’s views of what has been read may change and develop (Chase, 2012). This change allows a student to view the work differently and learn in the process.

**Engagement Theory of Reading**

“Engagement is the level of cognitive involvement that a person invests in a process” (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010, p. 313). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) explain that “engaged reading is strategic and conceptual as well as motivated and intentional” (p. 404). According to Guthrie and Wigfield’s engagement model of reading development, four main constructs interact to create an engaged reader, including “motivations, strategy use, conceptual knowledge, and social interactions” (p. 410). The motivations portion of Guthrie and Wigfield’s model refers to the goals students have for reading, their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to read, their self-efficacy or how they feel about themselves as a reader, and social motivations, including wanting to share books read with peers. The construct of strategy use refers to the ways that students work to help themselves comprehend what they have read, as well as their self-monitoring and belief construction based on what they have read. The conceptual knowledge construct refers to the concept that reading is knowledge driven. A reader needs to have some prior knowledge of a topic in order to understand what they are reading. The final construct mentioned in Guthrie and Wigfield’s engagement model of reading development is social interactions. This construct refers to reading as a social endeavor. Engaged readers want to share what they have been reading about with others.

Lutz, Guthrie and Davis (2006) describe engagement as a multidimensional and dynamic area of reading development. These authors explained four areas of student engagement: affective, behavioral, cognitive and social. Affective engagement is the positive emotional
displays of students’ reactions toward their teacher, classmates and school, which leads to a connection to school and a commitment to their schoolwork. Behavioral engagement involves being an active participant in one’s education by paying attention in class, working hard to complete tasks, and asking and answering questions during instruction. Cognitive engagement involves working hard during the learning process, deep thinking about the topic at hand and diligently working to use known strategies. Social engagement involves the act of sharing ideas and interpretations of the text read with classmates and teachers. These dimensions of engagement show the complexity of the reading process for all readers.

Because engagement is such a multidimensional and dynamic process, truly engaged reading can be difficult to identify in the classroom setting. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2009) delineated a continuum of disengaged to engaged readers to help teachers and others consider how to improve the engagement level of all students. The disengaged readers along this continuum include fake readers, challenged readers, unrealistic or wannabe readers, and compliant readers. **Fake readers** are the most disengaged readers who employ many avoidance tactics during time given for independent reading. **Challenged readers** are the students who struggle with reading overall and, therefore, require extra attention and help when individually engaging in the reading process. **Unrealistic and wannabe readers** often choose books that are too difficult for them, struggle to comprehend it and then seldom finish a book once they have started. **Compliant readers** are the readers who read because they have been told to do so, but read books randomly and seldom read outside of the classroom setting. Engaged readers along this continuum include: Does nonfiction count? readers, I can, but I don’t want to (even though I enjoy it) readers, stuck in a genre (or series) readers, and bookworms. **Does nonfiction count readers** want to read for learning and have a thirst for knowledge. These readers often have
trouble settling on a book because their classroom library doesn’t include a lot of nonfiction books or they feel their teacher values fiction or narratives more. *I can, but I don’t want to (even though I enjoy it)* readers are able to choose books, but usually read only when told and will do other things when given the choice. *Stuck in a genre (or series) readers* enjoy reading, but prefer to only read within their series or genre of books instead of reading a large variety of books. *Bookworms* love books. They have author and genre preferences, but tend to read a large variety of books. It is essential for classroom teachers to consider the continuum of readers within the classroom because the ultimate goal is to help all children become engaged readers who want to read for pleasure outside of the school day. By working with the students on an individual basis and helping them to find books that are of interest and appropriate for them teachers can help students become more engaged readers.

Creating a motivating classroom context is another way to increase student engagement in the reading process. This can be done through integrating instruction. Teachers can begin a unit of study by having students observe a phenomenon, such as insects on the playground, develop questions about the phenomenon, read to learn more information, and eventually share a final product with the class. Some or part of this exploration should be completed in teams or with a partner. The learning that happens during group processing sessions is invaluable to the engagement and motivation of the learners. During the study of insects, students can work in pairs to learn more about a chosen insect through experiments and classroom reading materials leading up to a project that explains what was learned during the experience.

**Motivation Theory**

Related to engagement theory, motivation theory works to explain and explore in more depth why some readers are more likely to choose to read than others. Winnie and Marx (1989)
explain how motivation theories account for three aspects of behavior. The first involves what a student chooses to do in a certain interaction or situation, such as choosing to raise his/her hand or avoiding eye contact during a class discussion. The next aspect of behavior is the “temperament of a person’s behavior” (p. 224), such as being able to ignore distractions and the care taken in completing assignments. The final aspect of behavior mentioned by Winnie and Marx is persistence. This concept is related to the time allowed to complete a task versus the amount of time spent completing it. For instance, some students may spend a lot of time creating a word web or concept map while others spend as little time as possible. Since motivation is such an important aspect of engaged, successful reading, these behavioral concepts need to be taken into consideration.

Consistent with the above explanation, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) suggest that “reading motivation is the individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” (p. 405). Guthrie and Wigfield explain some key motivations for reading, including having learning or performance goals, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and social motivations. Learning or performance goals include the reasons why a person chooses to read, such as the desire to learn more about a particular topic or wanting to outperform others. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are key to the desire to read. Intrinsic motivation is an inward need to read for the sake of reading or learning more about a topic. Extrinsic motivation is the desire to read in order to receive an external reward, such as recognition or a trinket of some kind. Students with a high self-efficacy towards reading “see difficult reading tasks as challenging and work diligently to master them, using their cognitive strategies productively” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 408). Poor self-efficacy towards reading results in a lack of motivation to read. This is especially present in students who may have
struggled in learning how to read and still think of themselves as poor readers even though they are reading on a much higher level and seem to enjoy reading some books. Social motivations for reading make children want to read in order to interact with their peers about the book. All of these motivation constructs help to explain why some readers are more motivated to read than others.

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) also point out that attitude is different from motivation. Attitude refers to whether or not a student likes to perform a particular task, such as reading for recreational reasons and reading for academic reasons. Motivation involves the reader’s goals and desires to read. A highly motivated reader will choose to read at any given time.

A student’s motivation to read and self-efficacy towards reading are enhanced when they are given the tools to complete the task successfully (Guthrie et al., 2004; Lutz, Guthrie & Davis, 2006). Strategy instruction, such as teaching students comprehension strategies, helps students gain confidence in their ability to read and comprehend the text. For example, teaching students to ask questions while reading encourages students to stop once in a while to check and make sure that they are understanding what they have read, which gives them more confidence in what they are doing and learning.

Guthrie et al. (2004) shared some important aspects of classrooms that supported intrinsic motivation to read, including “a) content goals for instruction, b) choice and autonomy support, c) interesting texts, and d) collaboration for learning” (p. 404). These relatively simple classroom practices have a great impact on students’ motivation to read and to continue reading.

Perhaps one of the most striking things to note about motivation theory (and engagement theory too for that matter) is the fact that this essential part of the reading process was not included as one of the pillars detailed by the National Reading Panel (2000). Motivation is what
drives students to read for pleasure and enjoyment and basically become a lifelong reader, but it was not noteworthy enough to be considered by the panel as part of these essential aspects of good reading instruction.

**Significance of the Study**

This study was designed to fill the gap in research documenting classroom discourse, the literacy environment, attitude toward reading, engagement in reading, and teacher conceptualizations of her role as a reading instructor. By focusing on five struggling readers, I was able to focus on a small percentage of the students in this classroom using an exploratory case study methodology. There is a dearth of research that explores student interactions in early childhood classrooms. The present research study explored these interactions throughout the school day in literacy experiences in all language arts areas, as well as science and social studies. Much of the research on effective literacy teachers and the literacy environment as a whole are twelve to fourteen years old. There is a need for more research due to changes in education policy since the time that research was published. The research on students’ attitudes toward reading is limited in its scope. There are a limited number that use a qualitative methodology to explore attitude toward reading and even fewer that used multiple data sources. This research was exploratory in nature as I explored attitudes using observations of the classroom and interviews. These participants helped me to learn more about reading attitudes from their perspectives. A final area of focus was the teacher’s conceptualization of her role as a reading instructor. A teacher’s view of reading itself can have an impact on how she approaches the teaching of that subject in her classroom (Applegate & Applegate, 2004). A goal of this research study was to learn more about the teacher’s conceptualization of her role and how she enacted it
in the classroom setting. Ultimately, this research worked to fill the gaps and add to the research on student-student interactions, effective teachers and literacy environments, reading attitude, and teacher conceptualizations of their role.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of student interactions within literacy events in a second grade classroom as well as how the literacy environment affected these students’ attitudes towards reading, and engagement in the reading process. In addition, this study explored this teacher’s view of her role as a reading instructor.

Guided by the assumptions that students learn by interacting with others, the classroom environment impacts students’ literacy development and a teacher’s view of reading and her role as the reading instructor affects how she teaches reading, this exploratory study sought to add to the literature in several areas. These areas included the area of classroom discourse, reading attitudes and the teacher’s view of her role. The theoretical perspectives guiding this work include social constructivism, engagement theory of reading and motivation theory. This exploratory study aimed to explain how a group of struggling readers interacted in their second grade classroom under the guidance of their teacher and how all of these experiences affected their attitude and desire to read in the classroom setting.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This dissertation was designed to learn more about: 1) student interactions for struggling readers in a second grade classroom, 2) the literacy environment and how it affected students’ attitudes towards reading and engagement in literacy events within this classroom, and 3) how one second grade teacher viewed her role as a reading instructor and how she influenced the student interactions throughout the school day. With these goals in mind, five areas of research are explored within this chapter. First, I will explain what has been discovered in the classroom interaction research and the call for continued research in this area. Second, I will detail the current literature on literacy environment and how it affects a child’s overall learning development. Third, attitude is will be discussed with an emphasis on the fact that research in this areas is largely based on self-reported and survey data. Fourth, I will explain the current thinking on engagement and its importance in reading comprehension and other areas of literacy development. In the fifth and final area, I will share the research on how teachers view their role as teachers and the need for more work in this area.

Classroom Interactions

Talking and interacting with others is an important avenue to learning new things. Wells and Wells (1984) discussed a longitudinal study conducted throughout the 1970s of young children (just learning to talk) in Great Britain and noticed a connection between a student’s school performance and his/her language development before he/she entered school. With respect to the importance of talk in schools, Wells and Wells (1984) stated that “all children, we would argue, will learn most effectively when there are frequent opportunities for collaborative
talk with teachers and with fellow pupils” (p. 196). These conversations between the teacher and the students were part of the classroom discourse. Despite Wells and Wells’ (1984) findings, research (Christoph & Nystrand, 2001; Maher, 2012; Nassaji & Wells, 2000) has shown that teachers prefer more teacher-dominated forms of classroom discourse.

Teacher-Student Interactions

Classroom discussions are often very teacher dominated and characterized by the IRE (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) or IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) discourse pattern (Nassaji & Wells, 2000). In most classrooms, this invites a limited amount of student participation. Teachers usually ask a question, a student responds (after being called on by the teacher because he/she was raising his/her hand), and the teacher evaluates the response to indicate if the response is correct or not. Cazden (2001), Nassaji and Wells (2000), and Christoph and Nystrand (2001) have expressed the need for teachers to move toward a more participatory classroom in regard to classroom discussions.

Cazden (2001) has not only expressed the need for classrooms to become more participatory, but has shared numerous ideas regarding how this can be accomplished. Some ideas include asking more authentic, open-ended questions and then asking clarifying questions; allowing students to answer another student’s questions; not sitting in rows during discussions; and creating procedures for allowing students get a turn to talk while others are listening. Participatory classrooms offer students many advantages, including higher student engagement (Christoph and Nystrand, 2000), higher student achievement (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991), and a chance to think critically about their own ideas in light of what others share (Almasi, 1995).

Participation in the classroom discourse, including whole-class and small-group contexts, can have a huge impact on students’ school lives. Pressley et al. (2001) found that motivation...
and achievement are greater in classrooms where cooperation and participation of the whole classroom community was expected. Research discussed by Allington and Johnston (2002) showed that highly effective teachers allow students to discuss what they have read, and cooperative environments allow children to learn from each other through student-generated conversation. Morrow and Tracey’s (2007) explanation of the best practices in early literacy development highlights the need for children to share information with classmates and, therefore, learn from them by interacting in a classroom that promotes student-student interactions.

Maher’s research study (2012), explored how two teachers in Australia used Interactive White Boards (IWB) to promote student learning. During most of the observations, the interactions revolving around using the white board were very IRE in nature as described above. In small groups, the students created a text. As a whole class, the various texts were evaluated and revised under the teacher’s direction and IRE questioning. Because this was an exploratory study, the teachers and researcher worked together to design more student-centered lessons for the researcher’s final observations in the classroom. The final lesson was much different than the previous IRE type of discourses revolving around the IWB. This time, the teacher sat among the students in more of a mediator and tech support role. A student from each group went to the front of the room to work on the IWB. During the revision process, students made suggestions and helped add details, which the student at the front of the room added to the text displayed on the IWB. This lesson promoted a more open-ended discussion that engaged a larger portion of the class and encouraged students to discuss ideas with each other rather than using the teacher as a mediator. Allowing students to take the floor and act as a teacher promoted a more student-centered learning environment which helped all students create meaning from the text.
**Student-Student Interactions**

Cazden (2001) has recognized the importance of student-student interactions in the student’s learning. Cazden explained various ways to encourage peer interactions, including spontaneous helping, assigned tutoring, reciprocal critique (when working on a project), collaborative problem-solving (such as in a literature circle or buddy/partner reading), and working with peers and computers. Almasi (1995), Maloch (2002), and McIntyre, Kyle and Moore (2006) all have explored the peer interactions in a small-group literature discussion group format. Brown, 2006, Flint, 2010, Griffin, 2002 and Meisinger, Schwanenflugerl, Bradley and Stahl, 2004 all explored peer interactions in a buddy/partner reading context.

**Within the context of literature circles.** Literature circles or literature discussion groups are small groups of children who meet together after reading a text to talk about what they read. Before meeting with the group, students often record their ideas for discussion in a literature response log. These discussion groups allow children the opportunity to not only talk about their ideas and understanding of the text, but also listen and respond to the ideas and understandings of others (Pearson, 2010). This listening and responding will sometimes lead students to reevaluate what they were thinking and, therefore, result in a joint construction of meaning among the members of the group (Pearson, 2000).

Almasi’s (1995) study explored sociocognitive conflicts in peer-led and teacher-led literature discussion groups. An important finding was that the language used during the peer-led groups was more “elaborate” and “complex” (p. 341) and included more questioning than what occurred in the teacher-led groups. This shows the need to allow students to interact with each other in peer-led formats so that they are able to push each other’s thinking while changing and developing their own thoughts and ideas regarding a given topic.
A study completed by Maloch (2002) explored how one teacher scaffolded her students into better, and more productive literature discussions. The results of this study explicate the importance of scaffolding students as they embark on new experiences in the classroom. Students do not automatically know what to do when placed in a peer-led group. They need guidance and help from the teacher in order to learn how to interact appropriately. It is essential that the teacher is aware of how complex the task of interacting in a small group can be and understands the importance of slowly putting new ways of interacting into practice. This teacher spent a great deal of time creating guidelines and highlighting the good things she found students doing, generating a repertoire of discussion strategies over time, and then gradually releasing responsibility based on students’ strengths and weaknesses.

McIntyre, Kyle and Moore’s (2006) study explored how a primary-grade teacher worked to guide students toward productive small-group dialogue. The results showed the importance of what the authors described as “teacher-fronted talk” (p. 59), which involves the teacher using talk “to demonstrate, explain, and define in order to lead students to complex literacy academic understandings” (p. 59). Another important aspect of guiding students toward productive dialogue is what the authors referred to as “mediated action through teacher response” (p. 60). Examples of this guidance included wait time, a slow and deliberate pace, encouragement without too much praise, and reminders of word meanings. A classroom culture that promotes “collaborative work and the sharing of ideas” (p. 60) is also important to the development of a dialogic classroom.

With the goal of learning more about children’s talk during literature circle discussions, Pearson (2010) studied a class of 28 9-10 year olds in Scotland. Although she did not find students explaining their thinking using the text as she had hoped, Pearson uncovered some
important aspects of the talk shared by these students. These students’ interactions included a large amount of ‘cumulative talk.’ Pearson described the cumulative talk as unfolding in a “mutually supportive, uncritical way” (p. 6). When trying to get their ideas across to others, these students did not argue or debate with each other, but instead discussed the topics and came to conclusions through “a pooling of impressions” (p. 6). This allowed the children the opportunity to discuss their ideas without the fear of ridicule and criticism from their peers. Pearson also found that the students switched discourses during their discussions. She explained this as occurring when students would go back and forth between their school discourse of talking about the book in the proper format and their more informal discourse used with friends while talking about things that happened in the past based on connections made to the book. Pearson views some of these seemingly off-topic conversations about other things “as an encouragement to the children to related personally to the story they are reading and see it freshly” (p. 8). Students need to learn when these are appropriate and when they need to be stopped so that the discussion can move forward. Another feature of these children’s literature circle discussions included acting out the characters in the book using ‘voices’. This ‘acting out’ allowed the children to lift the characters from the printed page and into the current real life setting, which allowed the children further connection and understanding of the book as a whole. 

In conclusion, Pearson shared that this study showed that the children used “language as a tool to think together” (p. 9). Pearson advocated for more explicitly modeling the concept of using elaborate reasoning or backing up their ideas with text as well as accepting children’s ‘acting out’ of characters as a way to make the characters real to them.

Literature circles can be a positive way for children to interact with each other to construct joint meaning of a text. In order for these circles to be productive, however, teachers
need to carefully scaffold children’s discussions and monitor them closely for appropriate behavior while allowing some ‘acting out’ as children make the characters and literature a part of their own world.

**Within the context of buddy or partner reading.** Buddy reading is a method of instruction that involves reading with another person. In some research, this reading occurred between a primary grade student and an older student, such as a high school student or a college student (Gutshall, 2009; Taylor, 1999; Theurer & Schmidt, 2008). These programs worked to help students develop greater confidence in reading while working with a more able older student or adult. Other researchers looked at buddy reading at one grade level or in one classroom (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002; Katz & Bohman, 2007; Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley & Stahl, 2004). For the purpose of this literature review, I will review studies that examined buddy reading within a classroom rather than in a tutoring program.

Some researchers and educators view buddy reading as a way to help students develop fluency and automaticity skills (Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley & Stahl, 2004) while others view it as a way for students to read a text with the support of a buddy while interacting and sharing about the text in a variety of ways (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002; Katz & Bohman, 2007). In the Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley and Stahl’s (2004) study, the researchers observed 43 pairs of second graders in 12 classrooms. This study focused on the concept of buddy reading being a method to help build fluency and automaticity skills. These researchers created an observation rating scale in order to help them evaluate the students’ interactions in four areas: on-task behavior, instrumental support, emotional supportiveness and conflict management (p. 118). Overall, the researchers found that the partner reading interactions were generally successful with the students usually being on-task, and supportive
(both instrumentally and emotionally) with very few conflicts. The researchers recommended that teachers provide basic script instruction on how to participate in a buddy reading context and to allow students to choose their own partners.

The Brown (2006), Flint (2010) and Griffin (2002) studies looked at buddy reading as a more socially dynamic method of instruction which helped students develop skills in more areas than just reading fluency. In all three of these research studies, the students were paired with those with similar abilities.

A study completed by Griffin (2002) looked at the paired reading experiences of a class of first graders. At the beginning of the year when students struggled to stay on task, this classroom was set up in such a way that buddy reading was encouraged during individual reading. The classroom teacher encouraged the students’ buddy reading efforts through interactive mini-lessons that included a sense of brainstorming. The researcher found four significant categories within the data. The first category was motoric actions. Motoric actions referred to the constant motion in which young children engage. Finger pointing served numerous purposes, such as keeping one’s place in the book, reminding a partner to take their turn reading, and helping to figure out unknown words. Oral language was the second category. It involved interactions that did not include reading, such as structuring the reading event, offering hints or suggestions while reading, encouraging each other, and reminding each other about reading turns. The third category, verbal play, involved talk that was not text-related, but related to the readers’ amusement and enjoyment. This category included the use of funny voices, singing, chanting and playful talk revolving around pictures. The fourth and final category involved joint constructing behaviors in which students took turns reading a text in an almost choral fashion at times in when some students struggled to read some words.
Brown (2006) observed partner reading episodes in a second grade classroom where students were paired with students who had an equivalent level of development. Five themes of types of interactions emerged from the data. The first interaction theme was organizational. Organizational involved determining how to complete reading tasks that involved discussions of who reads first and what was included in the teacher’s directions. The second interaction theme observed was word-solving. Word-solving discussions involved students helping each other figure out words using rereading, picture cues and other strategies that had been supported through teacher demonstration. Meaning-making talk was the third interaction theme. It largely consisted of students making connections to the text and recording their ideas on sticky notes that they placed in the book. The fourth interaction theme was disputational interaction. Disputational interactions involved a disagreement between students in which they try to find some common ground. The fifth and final interaction theme is personal talk. This was the most infrequent of the observed interactions and it only occurred after the text had been read. The teacher in this particular classroom supported the students’ use of this sort of talk through mini-lessons and read alouds. Without her strategy instruction and overall encouragement, these young students would not have been as successful at the buddy reading interactions. During the self-talk that occurred while interacting with their buddies, the students “used external verbalizations to gradually internalize strategies that would serve to regulate their own intellectual activity” (p. 35).

Changing a current practice in her own classroom was part of the goal of a similar study completed by Flint (2010). Flint decided to have her first graders read in a buddy reading context instead of in an individual reading session at the beginning of the school day. This researcher found three themes from her classroom field note and interview data. First, the
students used reading strategies to scaffold learning, such as using prior knowledge and picture cues to help a partner figure out an unknown word. Second, the students also made connections with and to the text in order to construct meaning. By sharing ideas with one’s partner, the students were able to work together to make meaning from the text. Finally, the students used play as a type of social interaction and motivational method. This playful ideology helped the children to learn and read while interacting with others and having fun.

Buddy reading is a useful strategy that promotes numerous positive strategies and skills within the classroom setting. Not only can it develop students’ fluency and automaticity skills, but it can also enhance meaning-making and word-solving skills. This method of reading instruction also allows children to interact with classmates while learning how to apply knowledge learned from their teacher to a new context.

**Literacy Environment**

Cambourne (2000) described a literacy environment as being a very complex entity with three primary aspects. The first aspect of the literacy environment is the physical set-up of the space or as Cambourne called it “the inanimate physical paraphernalia that were present in the setting” (p. 512). The second aspect includes the human behaviors in the classroom which involve both the teacher and the student. The third aspect described by Cambourne involves the programs available in the classroom environment. This includes the routines and events that typically occur within the classroom setting.

The rest of this portion of this review of literature will focus on the literacy environment through the lens of the above described aspects of a classroom literacy environment.
Physical Paraphernalia

The items and physical set-up of a classroom environment have a great impact on what occurs in the classroom as well as how well the children learn to read, their attitude towards reading, and their engagement in reading.

Creating a print-rich environment is an important part of developing a culture that encourages literacy learning and positive literacy behaviors. As Allington and Johnston (2002) stated, “print-rich environments are necessary for children to learn literacy” (p. 62). This concept is so important that NCTE issued a resolution (1997) stating the importance of children having access to a print-rich environment to promote literacy learning. A print-rich environment includes print in all areas of the classroom: on the walls, on the shelves and especially in the hands of the children. Vukelich, Christie and Enz (2012) explained that teachers should create this print-rich environment by providing children with a library area, writing center, and literacy materials in multiple areas of the classroom.

A great deal of print adorning the walls readily available for use by both the teacher and the students on a regular basis is another important aspect of a high-quality literacy environment (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow and Gambrell, 2011; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998; Vukelich, Christie and Enz, 2012). This print should be both environmental and functional. Environmental print is print that children see all around them, such as signs for local restaurants and familiar food boxes (Vukelich, Christie and Enz, 2012). Functional print is print that guides classroom activities, such as the helper chart, daily schedule, classroom rules, calendar, and labels on shelves and baskets so that children know where items need to be returned. Teacher-made charts are also a form of functional print. This print can be lists of books that were read during an author study, a shared writing activity
completed after going on a field trip, or a list of ways to spell the long ‘a’ sound in various ways. The charts in the classroom setting should have a specific purpose and not just be for classroom display.

A large variety of print and literature, including different genres (fiction, nonfiction, fantasy, traditional literature, etc.) and types (picture books, chapter books, magazines, etc.) was described as being another essential aspect of the classroom literacy environment (Allington and Johnston, 2002; Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey & Del Nero, 2011; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Vukelich, Christie and Enz (2012) stated that classroom libraries should contain between 5 and 8 books per child. Some of these books can be part of a revolving collection that changes every couple few weeks based on themes, holidays and seasons, and student interest. Some of these literacy environments also included comfortable seating as well as books organized in baskets based on genre and difficulty level (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999). Diversity should also be a major consideration in choosing books to share with the children. All children need to learn about people different from themselves as well as to connect and see themselves in the books and stories provided in the classroom environment (Scott & Teale, 2009). This diversity should be embraced year-round, not just during September/October for Hispanic Heritage Month or February for Black History Month.

Another important aspect of this classroom environment is arranging the students’ desks into small groups in order to promote interactions when appropriate (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Sterling, 2011; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). This grouping allows children to share their ideas about what they have read and enables
teachers to easily encourage cooperative learning revolving around literature and other literacy activities.

A final aspect of these environments was to provide an area, such as a large rug, for the teacher and students to meet in a whole class setting for read-alouds (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998; Vukelich, Christie & Enz, 2012). These read-alouds were important opportunities for the teacher and students to interact with each other revolving around print.

**Human Behaviors**

Interactions, teacher behaviors and verbal explanations during the school day have been shown to have a huge impact on children’s development. In his article entitled, “What I’ve learned about effective reading instruction from a decade of studying exemplary elementary classroom teachers,” Allington (2002) explained the importance of talk in the classrooms that he had observed. He shared that the exemplary teachers he observed for his research “encouraged, modeled and supported lots of talk across the school day” (p. 744). I will discuss this type of talk in more depth in the context of the literacy environment.

Students in classrooms that were determined to have a high quality literacy environment shared a sense of the importance of the reading and writing activities present in the classroom setting (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). These students understood that reading and writing were important activities in which to participate as well as to master for themselves.

The teachers in these classrooms took advantage of simple teachable moments, such as commenting on the color of a stapler while refilling staples (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998) and discussing the beginning letters of the word shirt that a child brought to
share with the class (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999). Taking advantage of these teachable moments was an extremely important part of these literacy environments (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). As discussed by Turner, Applegate and Applegate (2009), teachers need to take advantage of teachable moments throughout the reading experience. Sometimes these teachable moments may occur in the middle of a lesson from a scripted program. By capitalizing on teachable moments a teacher can expertly guide students to look at a concept differently and help them improve and develop their literacy skills. A teachable moment may occur when a child does something as simple as tell his teacher about his new backpack. By listening and asking simple questions, the teacher can turn this statement of fact into a learning opportunity for the child by encouraging him/her to tell her more about the backpack and, therefore, develop his/her language skills (Vukelich, Christie and Enz, 2012).

Another important part of these literacy environments was the positive interaction between the teacher and the students. The students appeared to perform much better when they received praise and encouragement revolving around the areas of reading and writing rather than negative feedback from the teacher (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Konold, Miller and Konold (2005) explained that “feedback should focus on what the student did correctly, as well as what needs to be done to improve future performance” (p. 66). This type of feedback helps students know and understand what their teacher expects of them and what they can do to become more successful in the classroom setting.

The kinds of questioning exhibited by the teacher also affected the children’s literacy experiences. Asking more open-ended and higher order questions helped the students to develop
a better sense of literacy skills and achieve them at higher levels (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). In a study of three Year 2 (6/7 year olds) teachers in England, Flynn (2007) found that the teachers studied asked more open-ended questions to individual students during literacy activities than any other type of question. (The question options for these teachers included open-ended questions to individuals, small groups, whole class and closed questions to individual, small group, and whole class). Vukelich, Christie and Enz (2012) reiterated the importance of open-ended questioning and conversations as a method to help develop the language skills of young children. By participating in reciprocal discussions with students, teachers allow students to share their ideas more openly and more in-depth when offered open-ended questions from the teacher, such as “What makes you say that?” or “Where did you get that clue from?” (Vukelich, Christie and Enz, 2012, p. 104).

All of these teacher behaviors work with other factors in a literacy environment, including the physical set-up and programs, to help students develop and achieve at higher levels of development.

**Programs/Routines/Events**

The overall and detailed approach used by teachers in literacy also had a tremendous effect on the literacy learning of the students in their classrooms. Explicit and systematic instruction of some skills was an important part of the literacy environments created by the teachers in these studies (Cambourne, 1999; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Scott and Teale (2009) interviewed three prominent urban educators in regard to their views on teaching literacy to urban students. One of those teachers (Diana) shared the following idea about what she felt
was important for teachers to do for their urban students. She said, “employ a range of language
and literacy teaching and learning strategies that are explicit and systematic to ensure both
confidence and competence” (p. 339). Allington (2002) agreed with this concept when he
explained the importance of modeling what good readers do. Students of all levels and abilities
need teachers to help them develop skills and strategies for successfully reading and
comprehending text. These strategies include word recognition (decoding) strategies, and
comprehension strategies. Gipe (2010) explained some word recognition processes. These
processes include context clues (which include expectancy clues, picture clues and meaning
clues), knowledge of word parts (which includes phonic analysis and structural analysis), visual
analysis, blending and synthesizing, and dictionary skills. These processes help students figure
out unknown words while reading a text. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) described numerous
comprehension strategies that are naturally utilized by good readers, but need to be explicitly and
systematically taught to readers. These strategies include monitoring comprehension, activating
and connecting to background knowledge, questioning, visualizing and inferring, determining
importance in text, and summarizing and synthesizing information. These strategies help readers
to develop the skills necessary to be successful readers. The importance of the teaching of skills
and strategies was reiterated by the NCTE (1999) in their position statement on reading. The
statement states that “our society and our schools must provide children with a teacher who helps
them develop an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies.”

Experiencing reading in a variety of formats, including whole group, small group, and
one-on-one were all important parts of these literacy environments (Morrow, Tracey, Woo &
Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston,
1998). Whole-class presentations of a comprehension strategy using a picture book can be
reinforced during a small group guided reading session using instructional level text and revisited in a one-on-one reading conference revolving around a child’s individual reading. Allowing students plenty of time to read books of their choice that are appropriate for their reading level and interests is also an important aspect of an effective literacy environment (Allington, 2002; Allington & Johnston, 2002; NCTE, 1999). Partner reading or buddy reading (as explained in the previous section) is another important reading format that teachers should utilize in their classroom environments. In studies, these effective literacy teachers also had children reading with parent volunteers both in class and for homework as part of their literacy curriculum (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Taking the reading into the home is an important way to get parents involved in their child’s schooling and helping them understand what they can do to help their child become a successful reader and writer.

Reading aloud to the children and including a large variety of quality children’s literature in the classroom setting was another important part of their instructional programs (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Sometimes these read alouds should be a shared reading experiences where the children are able to join the teacher in the reading by filling in words or answering questions. Topping and Ferguson (2005) found that “effective teachers were more likely to teach a range of literacy skills and knowledge at the word, sentence and text level through the context of a shared text” (p. 126). This finding points to the importance of using literature to develop children’s skills, strategies and knowledge levels.

Another important aspect of these exemplary classrooms included using reading and writing in conjunction with each other. These teachers used reading to help teach writing and
used writing to help teach reading (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). One way to do this is to use strategy ideas, such as Bass and Woo’s (2008) comprehension windows strategy. In this strategy, teachers help students organize informational text information using a modified file folder and sticky notes. This prop helps the student organize the information they have just read into a format that will eventually help them write about it. When reading and writing are taught in conjunction like this, students are much more motivated to participate and engage in the activity.

The connections between reading and writing were not the only connections made in these classrooms. The teachers also worked to make connections between their reading and writing programs and the content areas of science, social studies and even math (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). These connections helped students see and understand the importance of reading and writing in all aspects of their schooling, not just during ‘reading’ time or ‘writing’ time.

Motivation and student engagement in the classroom literacy activities was another important aspect of these high quality literacy environments. These teachers worked to plan motivating activities that would encourage their students to become actively engaged in reading and the literacy environment (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). This concept will be addressed more fully in a later section of this chapter.

Because of these motivating activities and the high degree of student motivation, classroom management was not an issue for these teachers. If a situation arose, they usually used simple, non-punitive means to help the child get back on-task, such as placing a hand on the
child’s shoulder (Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999) or reminding the child what had been explained earlier (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). As described here, the programs and activities that the teachers utilized in their classrooms created powerful learning environments for their students.

**Attitude**

Lazarus and Callahan (2000) explained the importance of reading attitude, asserting that, “Reading attitude fulfills a pivotal role in the development and use of lifelong reading skills” (p. 217). Researchers have explored various aspects of reading attitude throughout the last few decades. In their comprehensive study of reading attitude, McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) studied a national sample of over 18,000 students from 229 schools in 95 districts across 38 states. They found a decline in attitude towards both academic and recreational reading from grades one through five. The researchers also found a relationship between negative recreational reading attitude and reading ability. Students who struggled with reading shared a worse attitude towards reading than students who were successful readers. Lazarus and Callahan (2000) found, on the other hand, that students identified with a learning disability who received instruction in a resource room did not share in this negative trend. These researchers found a declining attitude toward recreational reading across grade levels, but attitudes toward academic reading remained steady from the primary to intermediate grades.

Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) found an interesting phenomenon when comparing data from 1998 to that obtained in 2003 in the United Kingdom. They studied students who were in years four and six in school, and discovered that students reported having more confidence in reading and needing less support in 2003 than in 1998. However, these students were also less
likely to enjoy reading in 2003 as compared to 1998. These results were confirmed by the fact that new literacy legislation changed instruction delivery following the 1998 survey.

Williams and Hall’s (2010) study reiterated some key concepts about reading attitude. Through the use of simple interviews, these researchers found support for the importance of allowing students time to read independently, as students reported that they learned more and became better readers by reading independently rather than being read to by their teacher or another adult. Students also indicated an understanding of reading being important to school success, as well as to later success in life.

Even though Williams and Hall’s (2010) study is a beginning toward a qualitative exploration of reading attitude, more research is needed. In their article explaining the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, McKenna and Kear (1990) describe their quantitative instrument as “a natural complement to qualitative approaches” (p. 626). This statement acknowledges the importance of using more than one type of methodology to explore students’ attitudes towards reading.

**Engagement**

In recent years, reading engagement has been linked to students’ comprehension of text (Guthrie et al., 2004; Guthrie, Alao & Rinehart, 1997; Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Lutz, Guthrie & Davis, 2006; Wigfield et al., 2008), and achievement scores (Brozo, Shiel & Tanning, 2007; Guthrie, 2004; Guthrie and Cox, 2001; Lutz, Guthrie & Davis, 2006). It has also been defined in multiple ways over the last two decades as a result of these explorations. Guthrie (2004) explained that the range of these definitions contain two common components. First, a student is an engaged reader when he/she is excited and participates actively in the reading process.
Second, students are engaged when they comprehend the text by using cognitive strategies or other means to help in the process of understanding what was read.

Research on the topic of reading engagement suggests some important concepts for further exploration. Pflaum and Bishop (2004) explored student perceptions of when they were engaged in reading class, and times when they felt disengaged. The students reported being more engaged during teacher read-alouds and sustained silent reading (when they were able to select the material, read quietly, and not worry about writing about the book) than when they read orally out of a textbook.

Another way to improve students’ engagement in reading during their school reading experiences is to teach them reading strategies to help them handle difficult reading situations that they may encounter during their daily class and independent reading experiences (Guthrie et al., 2004; Guthrie, Alao & Rinehard, 1997; Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Lutz, Guthrie & Davis, 2006). An additional aspect of supporting student reading engagement is to scaffold and support student efforts to complete tasks. A study completed by Lutz, Guthrie and Davis (2006) explored the importance of using scaffolding strategies to increase students’ engagement in classroom reading activities. The researchers coded instances where teachers provided motivational, cognitive, conceptual, or social support for engagement during complex classroom literacy tasks. The researchers found that when teachers initially supported student efforts to complete complex tasks through scaffolding, over time students were better able to take over the tasks leading to increased achievement scores in the area of reading comprehension. The complexity of the tasks initiated by the teachers also affected the children’s level of engagement and overall achievement. When the tasks were more complex and met more of the criteria being looked at by the researchers, such as task being based on a book that was complex and task performance
would likely benefit from vocabulary knowledge, the students were more engaged and challenged by the task that they were completing. The students who participated in the classrooms that offered more complex tasks (ones that met 12-13 of the 13-item checklist) showed higher engagement in the task and higher achievement at the end of the study.

High-quality instruction is one factor that has the greatest effect on students’ engagement in reading and school-related reading activities. The high-quality literacy teachers described in the literacy environment portion of this review of literature did not have to worry about ways to engage their disengaged readers because all of their students were actively engaged in the classroom activities due to the way that the teachers taught (Guo, Connor, Tompkins & Morrison, 2011; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). The students developed an appreciation for reading and learned to enjoy it due to a number of strategies used by their teachers. These included being offered a variety of literature, being taught reading strategies, having lessons based on their needs and interests, and reading in a variety of formats: small-group, buddy reading, individually, with parent volunteers and at home as with their parents.

Brozo, Shiel and Topping (2007) explored the concept of engagement by analyzing the results of PISA (Program for International Student Assessment). The authors made some suggestions for ways to increase reading engagement in English-speaking countries based on the results of the assessment. These suggestions included increasing personalized reading time beyond the elementary years, increasing engagement for boys by allowing them to read alternative texts (i.e., computer web sites), and increasing the diversity of texts that students read while in school. The PISA data also revealed a vital statistic about the importance of reading engagement. “PISA youth from the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) who were highly engaged
readers performed as well on the assessment as highly engaged youth from the middle SES group and youth with medium levels of engagement in high SES group” (Brozo, Shiel, & Tapping, 2007, 307-308).

**Teacher Views on Teaching through Metaphor**

People’s beliefs guide their thoughts, actions and feelings about things. Kagan (1992) described a teacher’s beliefs as “tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught” (p. 65). These beliefs have also been shown to affect how teachers approach the classroom setting. Often these beliefs about teaching and learning are a result of a teacher’s prior experiences with school and their own education. Just as students do not enter classrooms as blank slates, pre-service teachers do not enter teacher education programs as blank slates. These future teachers bring all of their prior experiences (good and bad) from school and life as they enter the classroom setting (both the college classroom and their practicum or internship classrooms) (Bullough, 1991; Cassel & Vincent, 2011; Farrell, 2006; Marshall, 1990).

A considerable amount of research has been done on pre-service teachers and how they view the act of teaching. Many of these studies shared the view that these prior experiences and beliefs would have an impact on how they would approach their career as teachers (Bullough, 1991; Cassel & Vincent, 2011; Farrell, 2006; Marshall, 1990). The researchers conducting these studies utilized a variety of methods to analyze the metaphors revealed by these classroom teachers. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explained metaphor as a vehicle to help us understand the world around us. People use metaphors to help explain complex, abstract concepts by considering them in terms of simpler, more concrete concepts. Many of these studies used
metaphor explorations as a way to help these pre-service teachers confront their views of
teaching and openly discuss them in terms of their experiences in a classroom setting.

Some researchers chose to explore the teachers’ metaphors throughout the students’
participation in a college course. These pre-service teachers disclosed their views of teaching
through journals and discussion where these metaphors were developed and shared during a
course in their teacher education program. Bullough (1991) had his students develop a personal
metaphor to describe their role as a teacher based on their personal educational and personal
histories. The students worked with and revised their metaphors throughout the semester while
participating in their student teaching experiences. In Marshall’s 1990 study, the students used
metaphor as a form of reflection during a student teaching seminar. The students were instructed
to think about and list their roles as teachers, come up with related metaphors, and discuss them
with a small group. Then the students considered the problematic roles that they shared and
discussed them. The final step was to revisit the problematic roles and try and come up with a
different metaphor to describe that role. This exercise proved to be an insightful experience for
the students as they worked to create more positive metaphors for those problematic roles. This
insight did not necessarily transfer into action in the classroom setting, however. Marshall
explained that barriers to the students fully changing included a lack of understanding of student
learning, difficult classroom environments, and the need for more individual attention and later
follow-up from the instructor than the seminar course provided.

Other studies used metaphors that students shared with the instructor as a way for both
the researcher and teacher education program to learn more about students’ metaphors for
teaching and learning, and to help the students learn more positive and adequate views of
teaching and learning. For instance, Cassell and Vincent (2011) collected student views of math
and science via a questionnaire at the beginning of their methods course. The researchers then used the constant comparative method to categorize the metaphors into overarching categories. These metaphors helped the instructor/researchers develop a better understanding of what their students thought of math and science teaching. The results led the instructors to change how they taught their methods courses in an effort to help improve their students’ perceptions of math and/or science. Farrell (2006) used students’ journal entries and interviews to learn more about the preservice teachers’ “beliefs, experiences and conceptions of practice” (p. 239). In the end, this researcher suggested that teacher education programs help students verbalize their tacit beliefs so that they can begin to understand how those beliefs relate to what they are learning in their current coursework. The hope would be that students’ beliefs would morph and change as a result of confronting those beliefs and considering them in light of what they are learning in class.

A more limited number of studies have explored how experienced teachers view their roles as educators. Martinez, Sauleda, and Huber (2001) had experienced teachers who were enrolled in an instructional psychology course develop metaphors to explain teaching. The researchers categorized the metaphors based on the learning theories that the metaphor implied: behaviorist, constructivist or situative/socio-historic. Most of the metaphors shared by the student groups were considered to be behavioristic in nature. A study completed by Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, and Kron (2003) looked at how sixty (60) Israeli high school teachers viewed their role as teachers based on the metaphorical image that participants chose and discussed during an interview. The majority of the participants chose either the image of an animal keeper (caretaker) or a shopkeeper. The researchers felt that these images gave insight into how the teachers view their roles.
Very few studies make use of the technique of metaphor analysis used to interpret the teacher interview data in this dissertation study. The data and analysis for this dissertation will be discussed fully in the next chapters. There was only one study of teacher views on teaching that used this technique: de Guerrero and Villamil (2002). As part of the research, participants at a second language workshop on metaphors were asked to share the metaphors that they had explored and considered throughout the workshop experience. Twenty-two teachers chose to share their worksheets with the researchers. The researchers then used metaphor analysis procedures to systematically analyze these explicit metaphors to uncover the teachers’ underlying conceptualizations about ESL teaching and learning.

During my quest for research using metaphor analysis, exploring teacher views of teaching through metaphor, and how teachers view their role as reading instructors, I found only one study related to metaphor, teachers’/preservice teachers’ views of teaching and literacy or reading. Shaw, Berry and Mahlios (2008) examined pre-service English and foreign language teachers’ metaphors based on the participants’ answers to a questionnaire that sought their sense of teaching. Part of the questionnaire contained a list of metaphors, and the participants were asked to select the metaphor that best described their school experiences and then explain each metaphor that was selected. The researchers related the pre-service teachers’ metaphorical images to conceptions of literacy using a type-case model to analyze the metaphors. This procedure involved analyzing the metaphorical aspects of each case. The cases were compared and contrasted to determine patterns or themes, which also allowed for the discovery of typical and atypical metaphors and explanations based on how often the patterns occurred in the data.
Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlighted some important aspects of the classroom discourse, literacy environment, attitude, engagement and teacher metaphor research. Much of the classroom discourse research has explored various aspects of teacher-student interactions, in which discussions are largely teacher dominated and where students occasionally participate (Nassaji & Wells; 2000; Christoph & Nystrand, 2001). The research that has analyzed student-student interactions investigated them through the use of literature discussion groups (Almasi, 1995; Maloch, 2002; McIntyre, Kyle & Moore, 2006). These researchers have shared some interesting insights into the student-student interactions within a literature discussion group, but the students involved were usually in the intermediate grades. Buddy reading is another useful method to get younger students actively involved in reading and discussing text with a classmate (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002; Meisinger, Schwanenfluger, Bradley & Stahl, 2004).

A great deal of research has focused on what good literacy instruction looks like, especially in a first grade classroom. This research indicated that the room arrangement and presence of print materials on the walls and on the shelves were essential components for an exemplary literacy environment (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Additional important parts of these classroom settings included having a shared understanding between the teacher and his/her students about reading and writing, complex questioning techniques being utilized by the teacher, and having teachers take advantage of teachable moments (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998). Allowing students to participate in a variety of reading experiences that were motivating was important to
the overall effectiveness of these classrooms, as was reading aloud and sharing high-quality children’s literature with the students. These studies looked at the importance of the overall instructional atmosphere created by the classroom teacher, but there was little attention paid to how these environments affected children’s attitudes toward reading and engagement in the reading process.

The research on reading attitudes shared trends in declining attitudes as students progress through the grade levels (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). Surveys were largely the data tool of choice for the research on reading attitude (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Lazarus & Callahan, 2000; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004), which usually elicited a limited amount of information. Some interview research has been completed in the area of attitude toward reading (Williams and Hall, 2010), but this research did not include any classroom observations to compare a students’ self-reported attitude toward reading with behaviors within the classroom setting.

Orally reading a textbook was found to be a disengaging experience for many students while being able to choose what to read, as well as listening to the teacher read aloud, was found to be more engaging (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). The research on student engagement has also highlighted the impact of reading engagement on achievement. Reading engagement has been shown to have a major impact on reading achievement such that a student’s socioeconomic status and parents’ education is no longer a major factor in his/her reading achievement (Brozo, Shiel, & Tapping, 2007). Most of the research has explored the engagement behaviors of children in the intermediate grades, but few studies have focused on the engagement behaviors of primary-grade students.
A teacher’s underlying beliefs about teaching and learning can be easily explored through the metaphors that she/he uses to explain his/her thinking. A great deal of research has been completed on how pre-service teachers view teaching. Some of this research worked to help teachers understand their views. Other research worked to enlighten teacher educators about how these future teachers view various areas of teaching in the hope of helping teacher educators improve instruction for these pre-service teachers. Some research has been completed on how experienced teachers view teaching and their roles as a teacher, but few have used metaphor analysis to analyze teachers’ conceptualizations of teaching, and none used metaphor analysis to look at how teachers view their roles as a reading teacher.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Merriam (1998) stated that meaning is embedded within the experiences of people. The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of student interactions within literacy events in a second grade classroom, as well as the role that that literacy environment may play in the enactment of struggling readers’ attitudes toward and engagement in reading in this second grade classroom. Case study methodology provided a systematic and organized way in which to view focal participants and to share their “stories” using their voices. Data sources consisted of observation field notes, and student and teacher interviews collected over a period of eight weeks. Qualitative case study methodology enabled me to share a rich, holistic description of this group of struggling readers’ interactions, attitudes and engagement (see chapter 4). Inductive analysis was used to analyze the classroom observation and interview data, and metaphor analysis was used to analyze the teacher interview data. As a result, a holistic view of the nature of student-student interactions that occurred in one second grade classroom unfolded through the use of field notes and interviews and through the lenses of inductive and metaphor analysis.

IRB approval for this research study was received on March 9, 2011. See Appendices A-F for the following IRB related documents: IRB approval letter, recruitment speech script, parent information letter, parent permission form, student assent form, and teacher consent form.
Design of the Study

Gaining Access to Research Site

I gained access to Lighting the Way School (pseudonym) through the help of a colleague who worked through auxiliary services. She talked to the teachers and the principal about my work, then put me in contact with a teacher that she felt was a knowledgeable educator who would be willing to work with me on this research. This colleague also helped me to gain permission from the principal in order to complete my research in the school.

Lighting the Way School is a K-8 Catholic school located within a major city. At the time of this study, the school’s student population was mixed with about seventeen percent minority. There were two classes of each grade within this K-8 school with the total student population being approximately 450 students. The school is a fixture in the Amiable Hill neighborhood, and earned the distinction of being a Blue Ribbon School through the National Blue Ribbons School Program, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education, in 2005.

Although the school was founded in 1921, the L-shaped brick-building hides its age well. The walls were adorned with student work throughout the parts of the building that I frequented. The entry way even contained student artwork from years past. The building contained three floors including the basement.

The classroom. Miss Beckham’s classroom was located on the main floor, on the right hand side at the opposite end of the L shape from the office. When you entered the classroom you faced a line of large windows. The chalkboard and front of the classroom was on your right. Freestanding blue lockers for student backpacks and other personal belongings were along the back wall. Miss Beckham’s desk was at the left side of the chalkboard at the front of the room opposite from the door. A large rug in the shape of a world map and big enough to hold all 27
students during classroom lessons and read-alouds filled the space between the doorway and Miss Beckham’s desk. Bookshelves lined the space under windows. These shelves were full of chapter and picture books that the students could choose to read whenever they had free time. A smaller open-faced bookshelf where students could easily see the covers of books sat near the teacher’s desk. The contents of this bookshelf changed often based on the current theme or author study occurring in the classroom. A word wall was displayed in two rows on a side chalkboard that was opposite from the windows. Computers were located opposite of the windows in the back of the room by the lockers. The students sat in rectangular groups of between 5 and 8 students. The class schedule was displayed with words and pictures on the front chalkboard next to Miss Beckham’s desk. Student work was proudly displayed on the large bulletin boards outside the classroom, on a clothesline stretched across the back of the classroom and on the narrow bulletin board area above the word wall.

Participants

All names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms. The focal children had the opportunity to choose their pseudonym while the teacher and other student pseudonyms were chosen by the researcher.

The teacher: Miss Beckham. As previously mentioned, Miss Beckham was recommended by a colleague as a knowledgeable educator in reading and language arts. She was in her third year of teaching and had earned her master’s degree from a local private institution the year before. Based on communication with Miss Beckham, I felt strongly that her classroom would provide a rich context for my work. She reported using a variety of methods to teach the subject of reading and support students in their acquisition of the skills necessary for reading success based on e-mail communication before the research was initiated in the
classroom setting. Before I entered her classroom, Miss Beckham was aware of a couple of aspects of my research. She knew that I was interested in learning about student-student interactions and I later explained that I also wanted to learn about students’ attitudes towards reading and engagement in reading. The methods included utilizing a reading center method of instruction as well as using a reading series as the main source of reading material. The second grade teachers also included author studies as part of the reading curriculum on weeks when the reading series included a review of recent stories. Miss Beckham used the stories and some center suggestions from the reading series teacher manual if she felt “the kids would enjoy them because they’re obviously already connected to the story” (teacher interview, 4-21-11). In this classroom, the reading series was used as a resource for center ideas, stories that could be read, and the supplemental books were used for guided reading instruction earlier in the school year. Miss Beckham did not use the reading series to tell her what to do to teach reading. She preferred to make those decisions based on what was appropriate for her students during that week of the school year.

This center method of breaking the children into smaller groups allowed Miss Beckham to work with smaller groups of students for reading instruction, rather than working with the class as a whole. The typical centers included a center where the students worked with Miss Beckham to either read a text or work on an activity related to the text, the students listening to an adult read from chapter books at the parent volunteer center, and students read individually from a book of their choice. Reading aloud to the children throughout the school day was also a big part of Miss Beckham’s instruction, such as reading the book *ABCs of Jobs: The People that Make America Work* during a Social Studies lesson about jobs and careers (field notes, 4-18-11)
As mentioned above, Miss Beckham’s reading classroom was center-based. Each day the class of 27 students would be split up in some way. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, this would usually include four different centers. During this research study, the students were grouped more heterogeneously with the struggling readers participating in three different groups. For example, on Monday, April 11, the students participated in four centers. They listened to Mrs. Seuss (pseudonym for the parent volunteer) read from *How to Eat Fried Worms* and discussed some comprehension questions, as well. The second center was reading Patricia Polacco’s book *Thundercake* out of the reading book with Miss Beckham. The students read this book in a round-robin format. Miss Beckham listened to the students and offered assistance, such as by providing the pronunciation of a word when they struggled saying it. Word work was the third center. The students at this center had three choices. One choice was to spell the spelling words out using “bananagrams”. Another choice was to put the typed-up spelling words into alphabetical order and then write them on handwriting paper. The third and final choice was to create an adjective book about themselves. The final center was free read along with completing Accelerated Reader quizzes. On Tuesdays, the schedule was different because the primary students attended mass first thing in the morning and did not start their morning routine until after 9:00. A parent volunteer would usually arrive around 9:30, and the students would be split into two groups. One group would go listen to the parent read while the other group wrote the definitions for their vocabulary words from the reading series. If they were doing an author study, on the other hand, then they would do an activity related to the author or one of the stories. On Tuesday, April 5, Miss Beckham read the students two books by Steve Jenkins and discussed
them while the other group was listening to the parent volunteer read from *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*.

**Student participants.** Student participants were chosen based on two criteria. First, I briefly spoke to Miss Beckham about her students’ reading achievement. Because of my interest in struggling readers, I was interested in the students who were having trouble in the reading classroom. During this discussion, I specifically asked Miss Beckham about the students in her classroom who received Title I services. During our formal semi-structured teacher interview, I asked Miss Beckham how students were chosen to receive Title I services. She shared with me that at the beginning of the year Mrs. C (the Title I reading specialist) “tests all of them and the ones that kinda qualify automatically because their fluency is so low and she picks them up and there’s some bubble ones and then she’ll decide depending on groups if she’ll take them or not. Then as the year goes, if I see that they’re struggling with comprehension, I’ll ask her to pick them up” (teacher interview, 4-21-11).

Since Miss Beckham indicated that seven children received additional help in reading and two students did not receive parent permission to participate in the study, I chose to focus on the remaining five students instead of limiting my observations to only three or four of them. Three boys and two girls became the focal students for this research project. Anthony, Bartee, Bean, Riley and Scully (all self-chosen pseudonyms) were the five students who took part in this research study.

**Anthony.** Anthony was an eight-year-old boy who had attended Lighting the Way School since kindergarten. He was often observed reading a book (usually from the Geronimo Stilton series: field notes, 4-15-11 and interview data, 4-27-11) after completing his work. Anthony often struggled completing certain tasks in a timely manner, such as copying definitions
from the glossary in the reading book (field notes: 4-12-11, 5-3-11, 5-10-11, 5-13-11, 5-17-11) and decorating a birthday letter for a classmate (field notes: 4-7-11, 5-2-11, 5-16-11), though, because he struggled with ADHD and was often seen staring into space or doing other tasks instead of his work. Anthony had a great need to have a sharpened pencil before completing any written work (field notes: 4-19-11, 4-27-11, 5-3-11, 5-4-11, 5-5-11, 5-10-11, 5-11-11). This ‘need’ hampered the amount of time that it took him to complete his work as well. When reading aloud in small group setting, Anthony was often seen using his finger to track words as he read (field notes: 4-7-11, 4-18-11, 5-6-11, 5-19-11), which he was not observed doing while reading silently at his desk as well as being a fairly fluent reader who read with expression (field notes: 5-6-11, 5-23-11) unlike the other children focused on in this research project.

**Bartee.** Bartee was new to the school this year, and had numerous social and academic issues. His reluctance to follow directions and the classroom routine hampered his ability to have time to read individually. Most mornings Bartee struggled to get started with his day (field notes: 4-6-11, 4-7-11, 4-15-11, 4-21-11, 5-4-11, 5-6-11, 5-11-11, 5-17-11, 5-18-11, 5-19-11, 5-20-11, 5-24-11, 5-25-11) and completing some of the morning work, such as the birthday letters that the students wrote to their classmates on their birthdays (4-18-11, 5-2-11, 5-9-11, 5-16-11, 5-19-11). He, therefore, was seldom observed reading and interacting appropriately with the other students. He did, however, do better when the teacher facilitated the activities, such as during the book talk sharing on April 21, 2011. On that day, Bartee asked his classmates questions about the books that they had read, such as “And then what happened.” While buddy reading with classmates, Bartee struggled to participate appropriately (field notes: 4-7-11, 4-18-11, 4-19-11), but enjoyed reading with older students when they came to visit Miss Beckham one afternoon (field notes, 4-21-11). During group read-alouds and whole-class social studies
discussions, Bartee enjoyed asking and answering questions (field notes: 4-5-11, 4-11-11, 4-15-11, 5-16-11).

**Bean.** Like Anthony, Bean had also attended Lighting the Way School since kindergarten. She is very social and enjoys interacting with her peers on a regular basis. This often occurred after finishing her Daily Math morning work when she should have been reading a book on her own (field notes: 4-4-11, 4-6-11, 4-7-11, 4-12-11, 5-4-11). These interactions were not related to the task at hand and were usually utilized as an avoidance tactic. Bean was usually observed avoiding her free read time by talking to others (4-6-11, 4-29-11, 5-4-11, 5-5-11, 5-12-11, 5-16), going to the bathroom (5-4-11, 5-24-11), and wandering the classroom (4-29-11, 5-13-11). Fortunately, this behavior changed before the end of the quarter. Miss Beckham helped Bean discover a series of books that met her interests. This intervention helped Bean to become more interested in reading on her own after finishing her work and during free read time. When reading out loud in a small group or buddy reading format, Bean was not fluent. She would occasionally need help figuring out an unknown word and sometimes read in a word-by-word reading style. Her reading seldom included expression or an indication of an understanding of punctuation (field notes: 5-9-11, 5-16-11, 5-19-11, 5-26-11). Overall, Bean displayed a lack of confidence in her reading abilities evidenced through her choppy reading style and great measures to avoid reading on her own. Miss Beckham also expressed this concern about Bean during our semi-formal interview (interview notes, 4-21-11).

**Riley.** Of the four focal students, Riley was the one who was able to complete her work the quickest. Like Bean, though, she enjoyed talking about “random stuff” (interview data, 5-25-11) with the children who sat in her group (field notes: 4-7-11, 4-12-11, 4-15-11, 5-6-11, 5-24-11), but, unlike Bean, would shortly pull her book out and start reading. Riley was also the most
shy of the four focal students. She was initially reluctant to be a part of this research study, but she did agree to participate after my presence in the classroom for a few weeks. When reading out loud in her small group or with a buddy, Riley had a halting, word-by-word reading style. Most of the time she appeared to know the words, but her reading lacked the expression and fluency of other students in the class (field notes: 5-3-11, 5-9-11, 5-16-11, 5-19-11). Another reading behavior observed of Riley was that when reading to herself she sometimes ran her finger under the words as she read (field notes: 5-2-11, 5-19-11) and also mouthed the words as she read (field notes: 5-2-11, 5-4-11, 5-18-11). Originally, I thought that this may be due to the difficulty of the large chapter book that she was reading, but I also observed her tracking the words with her finger and mouthing the words while she was reading a picture book as well (field notes: 5-18-11, 5-19-11).

Scully. Scully requested a lot of attention from his teacher in order to complete his work. He was very unsure of himself, and was always checking to make sure that he was doing things correctly. During my time in the classroom, Scully sat near Miss Beckham’s desk the entire time, even though she rearranged the desks once while I was observing in the classroom. She simply switched Scully and Bartee since they both required a great deal of attention and additional help. While working on his Daily Math assignment each morning, Scully would often ask Miss Beckham for help as he tried to understand what he was supposed to do (field notes: 4-15-11, 4-26-11, 4-29-11, 5-3-11, 5-11-11, 5-12-11, 5-13-11, 5-17-11, 5-24-11). He also needed additional teacher help on other papers as well (field notes: 4-4, 4-28-11). When Scully understood the purpose of the activity and what the expectations were, such as some journal topics and the birthday letters that the children wrote to their classmates for their birthday, then he did very well working on his own without the need to ask Miss Beckham for help or guidance.
When reading aloud in a small group or with a buddy, Scully was sometimes fairly fluent and read without many problems (field notes: 5-18-11, 5-19-11, 5-23-11, 5-26-11) while at other times he had difficulty and read in a choppy, word-by-word style of reading (5-6-11, 5-9-11). During the first week of my observations, I had the opportunity to sit down and listen to Scully read a Steve Jenkins book. Scully was able to read the book orally with few problems. He was even able to figure out the word ‘threatened’ without having to “sound it out” or use any other decoding strategies. Scully’s lack of confidence and comprehension difficulties limited his ability and desire to complete tasks by himself. I would sometimes see Scully sitting quietly at his desk while others were working on completing a paper or activity, almost like he was waiting from somebody to notice that he could use some extra help (field notes: 4-4-11, 4-28-11, 5-11-11, 5-18-11)

**Researcher’s Role**

My role within this classroom was that of a participant observer. Although I would have loved to be an outside observer looking in on the workings of this classroom, I soon realized that this was an impossible task. As Merriam (1998) explained, my very presence in that classroom changed the workings of the classroom and I, therefore, could not possibly be an outside observer because the children and teacher knew exactly who I was and why I was there. The students were aware that I was in their classroom to observe their reading activities to learn more about how second graders feel about reading, and that I may ask them to talk to me about reading and what I was observing in the classroom. The students became aware of my role in their classroom through the assent process before the study began. Merriam (1998) explained an outside (or complete) observer as a person that was unknown to those being observed. Although I had to remind some of the students once in a while that my role was not as an additional
teacher, but to observe and watch the happenings of the classroom, I found myself helping students sign onto the computer for their AR quizzes (field notes, 4-16-11), and giving them clues to help them figure out their “word ladder” papers (field notes, 4-6-11). I believe this helped the classroom to run a little more smoothly and helped the children feel more comfortable about my presence in the classroom. Throughout this study, I worked to maintain a participant observer stance to the observations of this classroom. I did struggle with this role in some cases, though, especially during conversations with Miss Beckham where my comments and questions in order to learn more about her ideas and thoughts on a subject prompted her to do something different in her classroom or during the centers. For instance, during one of our informal interview conversations, we were discussing using the book *Daily Oral Language* in her classroom and the fact that she had stopped using it in the classroom because it was so time-consuming. I was curious about how another teacher approaches this kind of curriculum with young students, but she chose to create a Daily Oral Language paper to use in the centers the following week (field notes, 4-6-11). In order to ensure the validity of what I was observing, I used my notes to guide questions that I asked during the semi-structured interviews with both the teacher and the students. As a result of my participant observer stance, my data collection involved the data sources of field notes, and interviews.

**Data Collection**

**Data Sources**

**Observation field notes.** According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), field notes are a venue to document what the researcher sees, hears, experiences and thinks while observing in the field. They are a means of collecting data and also contemplating the data in a qualitative research study. I took field notes of my observations of the focal students’ peer interactions,
interactions with the teacher, and behaviors reflecting attitude and engagement during literacy activities throughout the school day. These field notes served not only as documentation of student interactions, engagement and reading attitude, but also as information to guide my questioning in formal and informal interviews. Field notes were taken via laptop computer, and reviewed on a weekly basis in order to guide the interview process, as well as help to guide future observations. Each week, I observed a variety of learning experiences, including Reading, Spelling, Journaling, Science, and Social Studies. I observed at the following times:

### Table 3.1: Researcher Observation Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Reading; Spelling; Social Studies</td>
<td>8:45-10:30; 11:00-11:30 2:05-3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Reading; Spelling</td>
<td>9:00-10:30; 11:00-11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Journal; Reading</td>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Reading; Spelling; Science (every other week)</td>
<td>8:45-10:30; 11:00-11:30 2:05-3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Journal; Spelling; Reading</td>
<td>8:00-10:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the central theoretical framework underpinning this research study was Vygotsky’s theory of social constructivism, observations and field notes were the ideal way to explore students’ interactions during literacy events (See Appendix I for an example of Fieldnotes). These observations allowed me to witness and record the interactions as they occurred within the classroom context of their literacy classroom. Observations were also a good way to explore
students’ engagement. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) explained through their engagement theory that motivation and engagement are critical to students’ learning. Those researchers’ explained engaged reading as “motivated and intentional” (p. 404). Through my observations, I was able to see some of the focal students, especially Riley and Anthony, show motivation and intention in their reading processes as they independently chose to read following the completion of their assigned school work.

Observational field notes helped me to answer three of my research questions. Observations were essential to my exploration of the nature of students’ interactions within literacy events for struggling readers in Miss Beckham’s second grade classroom (guiding question number 1). These observations and field notes also helped me to investigate Anthony, Bartee, Bean, Riley and Scully’s attitudes towards reading and engagement in the reading process in their second grade classroom (guiding question number 2). Discovering the ways that Miss Beckham influenced the students’ interactions during structured literacy-related events was another research question that these observations and field notes helped me to explore and analyze (guiding question number 4).

**Interviews.** According to Hatch (2002), researchers use qualitative interviews to explore the participants’ experiences and interpretations in a focused discussion. In this study, interviews helped me to understand the students’ literacy experiences as well as their views of literacy. Because I used my field notes to guide the formal, as well as informal interviews, the interviews served the purpose of checking with students to make sure that I was interpreting my observations properly and allowed me to gather information that I couldn’t observe. Teacher interviews served a similar purpose. These interviews served as a way to check with the teacher about what I had observed and to explore her views on the teaching of reading. This research
study utilized two different kinds of interviews: formal semi-structured interviews and informal interviews, both with the teacher and students.

Engagement Theory and Motivation Theory support the use of interviews as a data source. The interviews allowed me the opportunity to talk to the children about their attitude towards reading and the reading process. I was able to learn more about how these children feel about themselves as readers and their views of what good reading entails, which are related to Guthrie and Wigfield’s (2000) theory of engagement. Interviews also helped me to discover the students’ motivations behind reading and reading certain materials.

Both teacher and student interviews helped me to answer three of my four research questions. Student interviews helped me to learn more about students’ attitudes towards reading, as well as the impact that student interactions played in the enactment of that attitude towards reading. These interviews also helped me in the exploration of students’ engagement in the reading process as well. Miss Beckham’s conceptualization of her role as a reading teacher was also explored through the teacher interview process (guiding question number 3). Teacher and student interviews also helped me to figure out how Miss Beckham influenced student interactions during the structured literacy-related events throughout the school day.

*Formal semi-structured student interviews.* One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with the focal students as the study progressed. These interviews were in a loosely framed semi-structured format (see Appendix G for the protocol and Appendix J for transcripts from one of the interviews). A semi-structured interview allowed me to have the ability to have general questions. These general questions focused on learning more about the students’ attitude towards reading, such as “How do you feel about reading? Why?” and student interactions within the classroom environment, such as “As part of reading, how often are you
allowed to talk to your classmates?” This generalized format allowed me to go with the flow and ask clarifying questions based on the answers provided, as well as ask exploratory follow up questions that arose from field note observations, and classroom artifacts. I talked to each of the focal students about their experiences of working on their book talk papers with their classmates the week before the first interview. This questioning helped me to learn more about their perspective on the topic, as well as how they felt about being able to interact in that scenario and how it helped their learning process. These follow-up questions were also used as a form of member checking. They allowed me to collect additional data and the students’ alternative perspective about what was happening in the classroom, such as the book talk project. These interviews took place during the fifth and sixth weeks of the study, and again during the eighth week of the study. They lasted approximately 10 minutes each. These interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed and analyzed.

**Formal semi-structured teacher interview.** Miss Beckham participated in a semi-structured interview regarding her view of reading, teaching philosophy, accommodation and motivation strategies, her role as a reading instructor, and her view on the effect of student-student interactions in the classroom (see Appendix H for the teacher interview protocol and Appendix K for teacher interview transcripts). The semi-structured format of interviewing allowed me the ability to ask clarifying questions during the interview, as well as clarifying questions about what I was observing in the classroom setting as a form of member checking. Since Miss Beckham and I spoke on a regular basis through informal interviews, my clarifications occurred during the regular class time rather than during our limited interview time. Although informal interviews occurred throughout the study, this formal interview that lasted
approximately an hour took place during the third week of the study. This interview was audio recorded and later transcribed and analyzed.

**Informal student and teacher interviews.** Informal interviews took place within the context of observations. These “unstructured conversations” (Hatch, 2002, p. 92) provided me with the opportunity to ask students to explain their perspective about the student interactions, and behaviors that I observed. For example, when I entered the classroom one day and noticed a small group of boys huddled around a book, I asked one of the focal students what they were doing. Scully quickly explained that they had been reading by themselves earlier in the morning. After I told him that I wasn’t the “reading police,” he told me that David had purchased the book at the school’s book fair going on that week. It was called, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid Journal: Do-It-Yourself Book*. The boys seemed to be discussing what should be drawn on one of the blank pages, but I wasn’t able to get close enough to hear much before they moved to a new location (field notes, 5-26-11). Apparently this book included blank pages for the children to record thoughts and ideas, as well as some full-color comics for them to read and enjoy. This interaction helped me to understand the kinds of books that some of the students in this second grade classroom were interested in reading.

Informal interviews were also used to talk to the teacher about classroom observations as questions arose. For instance, one day towards the end of the study (field notes, 5-18-11), I noticed that Bean was avidly reading a book, which was out of the ordinary. Bean showed signs of avoidance throughout my time in the classroom. On this particular day, I noticed Bean reading and asked Miss Beckham what precipitated this change. She proceeded to tell me the story behind the book that Bean was reading. Miss Beckham had become frustrated with the fact that Bean continually chose not to read during the time provided so Miss Beckham decided to
talk to her about it. Bean shared that she wanted to read books about children like herself. Miss Beckham, therefore, introduced her to a series called Ivy and Bean. Bean fell in love with the first book that she read and wouldn’t put it down. She even took it out to recess with her. Bean’s mom purchased her the first four books in the series, as well. Informal interviews such as this allowed me to learn more about the classroom and what was happening within the classroom context.

**Data Management**

I kept a separate file for each of the focal students. These files were kept in a locked filing cabinet drawer in a locked office. Classroom artifacts and individual interviews were stored in each student’s file. The teacher also had her own file in which I placed the interview transcripts. Field notes were stored in a separate file marked as field notes.

**Data Analysis**

**Case Study Analysis**

For the purpose of this study, the group of struggling readers is considered the case rather than simply the individual students. This allowed for a more complete view of struggling readers in general since this study looked more at the group of students rather than solely at the individual children. Merriam (1998) described case study analysis as “particularistic and descriptive” (p. 29). This study focused on a particular group of students and their literacy development. This method has allowed for rich descriptions of interactions, the literacy environment, teacher influence within the classroom setting as well as teacher perception on her role in the classroom and student perceptions about good reading and teacher support.

Stake (2000) explained that qualitative case study has a dual purpose. This methodology served as both a way to learn about a case (struggling readers), and as a way to explain what was
discovered through the learning process. This study is an example of an instrumental case study. I focused on five students as I learned more about the case of struggling readers. An instrumental case is a case that is chosen with the purpose of learning more about a particular phenomenon, not necessarily simply that case. This case was chosen in order to learn more about the student-student interactions that struggling readers participated in during everyday literacy events, the literacy environment that was created in this classroom and how that environment affected the children’s attitudes towards reading and their engagement in the reading activities within this classroom. Other concepts explored the teacher’s impact on the student-student interactions, how the teacher conceptualizes her role as a reading teacher, and the student perceptions of what good readers do and how their teacher helps them become better readers.

Qualitative case study is often observational in nature, as the researcher puts him/herself into the middle of the social situations of the case, or what is going on in the classroom setting in this particular case, but the researcher must also maintains the reflective side of the research as well. This reflection allows the researcher to follow where the research leads and tie the discoveries to the meanings within that cases themselves, that particular classroom, the teachers’ philosophy with the hopes of helping the reader of the cases to learn more about the focal students and classroom interaction through the use of descriptive narrative. The ultimate goal of case study is to help the reader vicariously experience the academic life of this classroom and draw their own conclusions based on the amount of description provided by the researcher. Through this description, the researcher helps the reader construct knowledge about the topic and cases at hand.
Inductive Analysis

Within a case study framework, I used inductive analysis to make sense of and analyze the data. Hatch (2002) described inductive analysis as starting with pieces of data, searching for common themes or patterns, and working towards making general statements about what was found. Data from the field notes, student and teacher interviews, and classroom artifacts (work samples) were pulled together during the search for patterns within the data. Hatch suggested nine basic steps in conducting inductive analysis:

1. Read the data and identify frames of analysis
2. Create domains based on semantic relationships discovered within frames of analysis
3. Identify salient domains, assign them a code, and put others aside
4. Reread data, refining salient domains and keeping a record of where relationships are found in the data
5. Decide if your domains are supported by the data and search for examples that do not fit with or run counter to the relationships in your domains
6. Complete an analysis within domains
7. Search for themes across domains
8. Create a master outline expressing relationships within and among domains
9. Select data excerpts to support the elements of your outline (Hatch, 2002, p. 162).

The initial step of data analysis allowed me to become familiar with the data and begin to search for patterns. During this step, I broke the data into more manageable parts for later analysis. Some examples of frames of analysis for the data described in this study include: 1) comments/conversations/events related to how interactions influence the participants’ reading
behaviors and the act of learning how to read, 2) comments/conversations/events related to participants’ attitudes towards reading, and 3) comments/conversations/events related to participants’ engagement in reading and classroom literacy events. As the researcher, I broke down the data, especially the field note and interview transcripts using the above frames of analysis to make the next steps of analysis more manageable.

The next stage of inductive analysis involved creating domains that reflect semantic relationships within the data. I searched each frame of analysis with a semantic relationship in mind to help create a domain based on the semantic relationships discovered. Some examples of the kinds of semantic relationships to be explored are: cause-effect, rationale, means-end, sequence, and attribution. Examples of semantic relationships for this data set include: “Getting smarter is a reason to read” (rationale relationship) and “reading quality literature aloud to the children is a way to engage them in the classroom literacy events (means-end relationship).

“Domains can be represented by identifying ‘included terms’ and ‘cover terms’ that are linked by a semantic relationship. Included terms name the members of the category and a cover term names the category into which all of the included terms fit” (Hatch, 2002, p. 165). A domain example for my study is shown in Figure 2.
Figure 3.1. Domain Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationships</th>
<th>Cover Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. gives information</td>
<td>is a reason to</td>
<td>read (why it’s important)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. get smarter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. need to read to go on to the next grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. can learn things from it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. gain knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. stay informed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the purpose of the study and research questions as a guide to decide which domains are applicable to the current research study was the next stage of inductive data analysis. During this process, I was careful not to eliminate domains simply because they had a limited number of included terms or to keep a domain because of a large number of included terms. These criteria can be deceptive and that’s why using the purpose and research questions as guidelines was a useful tactic for supporting the decision to keep or put aside a particular domain of data. This was also a good point to create codes to describe the data. Hatch suggested using a Roman numeral for each domain and a capital letter to delineate each included term. An example for the domain shown in Figure 2 above would be: reasons to read would be I and IA would be gives information, IB would be to get smarter, etc. as indicated above. Throughout this stage, I will need to be open to creating new domains and putting aside irrelevant domains.

The next six steps in Hatch’s (2002) description of inductive analysis involved ensuring that the previous steps truly reflect the data. I revisited the data to find examples of the prominent relationships and domains in the data. Next, I examined the domains to determine if other relationships exist within them. Another essential part of the data analysis process involved
looking across all of the data for general factors that bring parts of the data together, and involved patterns that were evident in different domains to show connections between the different pieces of the data.

Three themes emerged from the data during the analysis process of this research. The first theme was literacy environment and the teacher’s influence including the subcategories of the environment, the routines of the classroom and teacher activities within the classroom. The second theme was perceptions and attitudes about reading and learning to read. The final theme that emerged from the data analyzed was the when and why of student engagement. This theme explored the connection between when classroom interactions occur and why with a focus on teacher guidance and support. Appendix L contains a data display of how the domains fall into each of the themes explained here.

Metaphor Analysis

In order to get a holistic view of Miss Beckham’s conceptualizations of her role as a reading instructor metaphor analysis was used to analyze the formal teacher interview data. This analysis was done in addition to the inductive analysis described in the previous section. In their book, *Metaphors to Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explained that understanding is a main purpose of metaphor when they stated: “Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.), we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms” (p. 115). Lakoff and Johnson shared numerous examples of how we use metaphors to make sense of the world around us in examples such as “Time is money” and “Love is a journey.” de Guerro and Villamil (2002) shared some excellent educational examples in their research about the conceptualizations shared by ESL teachers. Their participants shared ideas such as teacher as
“coach,” “trail guide,” “lion tamer,” “tree full of apples,” and “gardener.” These ideas were then put into conceptual categories, such as “co-operative leader,” “provider of knowledge,” “challenger/agent of change,” and “nurturer.”

Armstrong (2008) explained that “Metaphor analysis is an analytical approach that examines linguistic metaphors (that is, the actual metaphors articulated by the participant), and then categorizes these metaphors in terms of conceptual metaphors in order to provide some insight into participants’ thought patterns and understandings of a given topic” (p. 212). In this research study, a number of steps were followed to analyze the interview data with the intent of learning more about how the teacher conceptualized her role as a reading instructor. The interview transcript was read and possible metaphors were highlighted for later analysis. In this study, the metaphors were largely articulated by the teacher spontaneously, due to the nature of the interview process. After the metaphors were identified in the transcript, source and target domains were identified for all of the spontaneous metaphors. Kovesces (2000) described a source domain as “the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain” (p. 4) and the target domain as “the conceptual domain that is understood in this way” (p. 4). Basically the source is the concrete concept that helps us understand the more abstract concept of the target. A common metaphor explained by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp. 44-45) is “Love is a journey.” In this example, journey is the concrete concept or the source while love is the more abstract concept or the target. Delineating mappings, which involves systematically listing ideas related to the source domain as shared by the participant and then listing related ideas under the target domain, was the next step in the analysis process. Some metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs) that people can say related to this conceptual metaphor include:
• It’s been a long, bumpy road.
• We’re at a crossroads.
• We’ve gotten off track.

The final step in the process was examining the metaphor’s entailments and figuring out the associated conceptual metaphor. Davis (2009) described a metaphorical entailment as “a possible outcome of an analogical comparison” (p. 307). An entailment for the conceptual metaphor “Love is a journey” from above would be: We have had some difficulties to overcome during our relationship. This research study looked at how this teacher views her role as a reading instructor.

During the one-on-one teacher interview, Miss Beckham and I discussed her views on reading, the teaching of reading and how she helps the students within her classroom. Following the use of metaphor analysis, as explained above, Miss Beckham’s view of her role as a reading instructor include being a guide and a cheerleader for her young students. Appendix M shows a detailed explanation of how these results were delineated.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is an essential component of any qualitative research study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Golafshani, 2003). Golafshani (2003) and Merriam (1998) stressed the importance of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explicated the concept of trustworthiness as a way to hold qualitative research to the same rigors as quantitative research. Trustworthiness is similar to the concepts of reliability and validity in quantitative research. Establishing the credibility of this research will allow me, as the researcher, to be confident with the ‘truth’ of my findings.
Transferability involves showing how my findings are applicable in other contexts. The dependability of my findings will be verified by the fact that they are consistent and could be repeated. The confirmability of my findings will be determined by how well I have allowed participants’ views and actions to shape the findings, rather than my biases and interests.

In an effort to ensure the credibility of this study, I shared my classroom observation notes with the teacher, Miss Beckham. This allowed the teacher to confirm or disconfirm what I was learning, as well as add a layer of truthfulness and triangulation to the study.

The fact that the one-on-one student interviews were partially guided by the words and actions of the students in the observed classroom context adds an additional layer of trustworthiness or member checking. The students had the opportunity to explain and clarify their words and actions that were observed. This student input not only adds to the triangulation of the data sources, but also ensured dependability, truthfulness, and confirmability of the data collected during observations.

Transferability is an issue of concern for all case study methodologies; however, the type of focal students chosen can be found in most second grade classrooms. Just as some second graders flourish in the process of learning to read and become engaged readers with a positive attitude, others struggle and may become disengaged and develop a poor attitude. The thick description that accompanies the reporting of this qualitative case study aids in the transferability of the data from this research. Member checking with all of the study participants will create triangulation for this study’s data.

**Summary**

This research study strove to explore the nature of student-student interactions, how interactions influenced student attitude and engagement in reading activities, the teachers’
conceptualization of her role as a reading instructor, and how the teacher influenced the student-student interactions throughout the school day. The participants in this study included one second grade teacher (Ms. Beckham) and five of her second graders who struggled with reading within her classroom (Anthony, Bartee, Bean, Riley and Scully). Through observational field notes and interviews, I worked to learn more about the literate lives of these young learners and their teacher. Through the use of inductive analysis, I was able to discover the nature of student interactions within this classroom context. Case study analysis added the students’ voice and ideas to the overall feel of this study while metaphor analysis helped me to delve deeper into the meanings behind the teachers’ views of her role as a reading instructor and the role played by student-student interactions within her classroom. These pieces worked together to create a view of the role that student-student interactions play in the life of one second grade classroom.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, case study methodology served a dual purpose in this study (Stake, 2000). One purpose was to learn about the case of struggling readers in Miss Beckham’s classroom. Case study methodology allowed me to focus my attention and energy on that portion of the students in this classroom. The second purpose of case study is to explain what was learned and discovered through the experience of focusing on these individual students. The observation and interview data for this research study were analyzed using both inductive analysis and metaphor analysis. Three categories emerged from the inductive analysis, including: literacy environment and the teacher’s influence, perceptions and attitudes about reading and learning to read, and the when and why of student engagement. During the metaphor analysis of the interview data, two descriptors arose of how Miss Beckham views her role as a reading instructor: guide and cheerleader. Metaphor analysis also revealed Miss Beckham’s views on how student-student interactions help struggling readers. Student-student interactions serve as exercise and a form of upward mobility for struggling readers. This chapter will explain what was learned about the struggling readers in this second grade classroom and their teacher using the themes discovered during data analysis. Miss Beckham’s classroom served as the overarching case in this study while the case included the struggling readers in Miss Beckham’s classroom, and the focal students included the students who were struggling, had parent consent to participate in the study, and also assented to be part of the study.
The Case: Miss Beckham’s Class

The Literacy Environment and the Teacher’s Influence

The first category revealed during the inductive analysis process examines the literacy environment and looks at how the teacher influences that environment. Cambourne (2000) asserted that the classroom literacy environment can have a huge impact on a child’s literacy learning. He further explained that inanimate objects, teacher behaviors, and classroom routines all have an impact on the classroom environment that promotes literacy development. A large variety of books and other print materials (this includes items on the walls too), arranging the classroom so students have a chance to talk to each other, comments that convey a strong pro-reading and pro-writing stance, consistent expectations about reading and writing, and routines that tell children about the importance of all areas of literacy all impact how a child’s engagement in that literacy environment. This theme of the data examined how students’ engagement in the literacy environment affected their attitude towards reading and engagement in the reading process through the subcategories of the physical environment, the routines of the classroom, and teacher actions within the classroom.

A literacy environment is so much more than just the set-up of the physical space. A literacy environment includes the interplay between the physical environment, the teacher and student behaviors and interactions, and the programs and routines promoted and encouraged by the teacher. Since it is impossible to fully explain the dynamics of the literacy environment that played out in this second grade classroom, I share this literacy environment based on three areas as discussed by Cambourne (2000): the physical environment, the routines of the classroom and the teacher’s actions.
The physical environment. Learning more about the role of the literacy environment and how it affected the focal students’ attitudes toward reading and engagement in reading activities were important aspects of this research study. The set-up of the physical space was a very inviting aspect of this classroom’s literacy environment. Upon entering the classroom, one of the first things that any visitor would notice was the large carpet at the front of the room. This carpet was used for large group meetings, including the morning meeting, meeting in preparation for centers, whole-class read-alouds, large group lessons in all subject areas, and small group reading with Miss Beckham on some days.

The children’s desks were arranged in groups, which was observed to be a good way to encourage conversations during some assignments. This classroom desk arrangement also turned out to be good places to have some of the center activities, including word work and activities based on various books or themes, such as completing the paper about the book *In Living Color* during the Steve Jenkins author study and writing about tacos during the week focused on Cinco de Mayo.

Materials available. As explained by Cambourne (2000), the materials available to the students in this second grade classroom made a large difference in the children’s development as readers. A variety of books were available to students in two different formats. One bookshelf contained books that were always present in the classroom. The top portion of the bookshelf contained chapter books that were organized by series. The bottom shelf contained picture books. The books did not appear to be organized in any particular way. There was also an additional, smaller shelf that contained the special collections of books based on the author studies, any special themes, such as Earth Day and Cinco de Mayo, and holidays that may be occurring during that month. This shelf was reorganized often as the author studies and themes
dictated. This shelf contained a combination of books from Miss Beckham’s personal collection and books from the library.

Print was present on the walls in this classroom in a variety of forms. There was a word wall on an unused chalkboard on the wall opposite from the windows. The wall contained words used to write the birthday letters that students wrote for each of their classmates and other words that were added earlier in the school year. I did not see any new words being added to the wall during my time in the classroom. A poster listing the class rules was posted on the wall above the word wall. Towards the end of the year, when students started to become more and more talkative, Miss Beckham would have them silently read the rules to themselves as a reminder of classroom behavior expectations. A daily schedule pocket chart was posted at the front of the room by the teacher’s desk and near the large group meeting area. This chart contained word cards with accompanying pictures for each activity of the day, such as centers, specials, recess, lunch and the other subject areas. Some student work was displayed on a bulletin board in the classroom as well as on bulletin boards in the hallway.

Two other aspects of this classroom that encouraged students to engage in reading included a chair pocket on each child’s chair where students could easily store their current reading material without the need to search through their desk for the desired book. There were also some rubber mats that the children could sit on while sitting on the floor throughout the classroom.

**Centers.** As Cambourne (2000) explained, inanimate objects greatly affected the literacy environment created by the teacher and these centers were an important aspect of Miss Beckham’s literacy classroom. The use of centers within this second grade classroom is one way that an engagement in the overall literacy environment was encouraged. During center activities
during the last quarter of the school year, the students were placed in heterogeneous groups. This allowed more able students to help struggling students on some assignments, such as when Riley worked with Anna to complete a cloze activity during Earth Week as described in greater detail in the unsanctioned interactions section on page 123. The students would ‘help’ each other in a variety of ways, such as telling each other answers to the word ladders papers (Anthony, field notes, 5-16-11) and helping them find answers in the book for the cloze activity during Earth Week (Riley, field notes, 4-28-11).

The variety of centers that the students participated in also encouraged them to remain excited about literacy learning. While participating in the word work center, students would complete a word work paper called “Word Ladders” that challenged their spelling and vocabulary skills as well as do activities related to their current spelling list, such as alphabetizing the words and spelling the words using “bananagram” tiles.

The free reading station allowed the children to read a book of their choice that was on their level. Based on my observations of Riley and Anthony, many of the children looked forward to this opportunity for self-selected reading. This was the only extended period of time during the day that the children had to read. The other times included brief opportunities after completing their work.

Each day one of the centers involved a read-aloud experience by either a parent volunteer or the second grade aide. During the final quarter of the school year while I was observing, this often involved reading a chapter book to the children, but from my understanding it often involved completing activities with the children based on the weekly story from the reading series earlier in the school year.
Buddy reading of either the current story from the reading book or a book of choice written by the author of the week was a center activity during at least one day during the week. Various activities related to the stories read, such as story maps and Venn diagrams related to the story read out of the reading book or about the books written by the author for the author study, were also part of the center activities each week. The large variety of activities included in the centers each day allowed the children to enhance their literacy skills in a number of areas.

**The routines of the classroom.** A variety of routines helped this classroom to operate as a positive place for students to learn and develop into successful readers. In Miss Beckham’s second grade classroom, students had the opportunity to participate in partner and group work in a variety of ways: buddy reading, graphic organizers, a book talk experience and at unsanctioned times when they were not supposed to be interacting and working together. Teacher read alouds and daily meeting times were also an important part of the routines in this particular classroom. These two activities occurred at least once each day.

**Partner and group work.** Although the students in Miss Beckham’s class were seated in a group style of desk arrangement and were sometimes encouraged to talk to others while completing an assignment, there were virtually no opportunities for the students to work collaboratively with each other to complete a task. Students were allowed to read books with a partner about once a week, but these opportunities simply involved reading the book without much in the way of additional interactions. Students also had the opportunity to complete some graphic organizers with the other members of their sitting groups following some reading experiences. The students also participated in a book talk experience during and after reading a Patricia Polacco book with a partner. There were also times when the students talked and helped each other when they should not have been helping or working together. These were times of
unsanctioned interactions. Most work in Miss Beckham’s classroom was completed individually with an occasional opportunity to discuss ideas with classmates if the assignment was more open-ended such as completing graphic organizers.

**Read aloud.** Read alouds were an essential part of Miss Beckham’s classroom. Since she felt that part of her role as a reading teacher was to excite her students about reading (teacher interview, 4-21-11), she took the job of choosing good books to share with her students very seriously. During the formal interview she explained that she motivated her students by being excited about what they were doing and by choosing books that are appropriate for her students. She said that “when we do an author study, when I’m choosing books to read to them, I try and choose the ones that have a message that’s pertinent to them” (teacher interview, 4-21-11). Miss Beckham read quality children’s literature to her second grade class on a daily basis. She read picture books and chapter books, nonfiction books and fiction books. She read them in the morning as they prepared to break up for their centers, after recess, in the afternoon or whenever the time was right. Her enthusiasm for the books was also catching, which was evidenced by how she talked about some of the books and introduced them to the children as well as how the students quickly returned to the carpet to here whatever story that Miss Beckham had waiting for them. Once returning to the carpet the students gave Miss Beckham their full attention as they anxiously awaited her to start reading. One day, the children returned from recess as she was saying, “Come on in, you’ve got to come here and listen to my favorite story” (field notes, 4-28-11). Miss Beckham proceeded to read to the class a book called *A Tree Named Steve* that was related to their Earth Week theme.

**Meeting times.** The students in Miss Beckham’s second grade classroom met with their teacher at least two times each morning. The first meeting occurred between 8:20 and 8:25 on
every day except Tuesdays since the second graders attended Mass from 8:00 – 9:00 each 
Tuesday morning. During the first meeting of the day, Miss Beckham explained to the class the 
schedule and some activities that they would be completing during that day as well as explain the 
writing activity for the morning. I took the following notes about what Miss Beckham told the 
students during my first week in the classroom:

Good morning, how is everyone? Did you have a good weekend? Today there might be 
some storms. This morning, here’s the plan for the day: we’re going to start by 
journaling about our weekend, at 9:00 Mrs. S will be here, and at 10:00 we’re going to an 
assembly and meet the artist is residence. Remember, short sentences aren’t always 
better sentences. You have plenty of time to work on it. Think about what you did 
Friday after school and Friday night, all day Saturday and all day Sunday. (field notes, 4-
4-11).

The second meeting of the day usually occurred between 8:55 and 9:00. This was the 
time when Miss Beckham would explain what would be happening during the center time on that 
day. As part of this meeting, Miss Beckham would list the centers on the board and explain each 
one as she wrote it. An example of a day of centers is below. The explanations after the “-“ was 
the verbal explanation given to the children and a further explanation for the purposes of this 
context.

1. Mrs. M (parent volunteer) – will read a couple of Steve Jenkins books to you
2. Animals – complete a handout about your favorite animal described by Steve Jenkins 
(Miss Beckham told the students they were expected to write 2-3 sentences about the 
book in their own words. She also said that they should read the book, close it and 
then write their sentences.)
3. Word work – bananagrams (spell the spelling words using some letter tiles), a word ladder paper, ABC order (put spelling words in alphabetical order using a list of words that has been cut apart and write the words alphabetically on a piece of handwriting paper)

4. Free read/AR (take an Accelerated Reader quiz) (field notes, 4-8-11)

**Content area reading.** In this classroom, social studies instruction was supposed to occur on Monday afternoons and Science instruction was supposed to occur every other Thursday. I observed social studies on four occasions and science on one. None of these lessons involved the children reading a social studies or science text of any kind. The students did read nonfiction text related to the theme of earth week and during the Steve Jenkins author study since he writes nonfiction books about animals during the reading portion of the day.

Of the seven Mondays of school during my eight weeks of observation, social studies occurred during four days. Two of the Mondays (5-2-11 and 5-9-11) that did not include Social Studies were spent working on other subjects, i.e. math and religion while the third one was spent watching a movie about a book the children had been listening to for the last few weeks (field notes, 5-23-11). The other four weeks involved one teacher read-aloud, but no reading completed by the children. On the first week (4-4-11), Miss Beckham reviewed the fact that the globe is a model of the world. They discussed other aspects of the world (i.e. the continent we live on and the number of oceans). On Monday, April 18, Miss Beckham read the book *ABC of Jobs: The people that make America work* by Roger Priddy to the children. They discussed the jobs and book throughout the reading. They were supposed to complete an assignment about a job of their choice, but they ran out of time so they completed it as a center activity the next day (field notes, 4-18-11). The remaining two Mondays (4-11-11 and 5-16-11) were spent reviewing
particular parts of the world map (Asia and then the United States) and they colored countries and states on the map. Miss Beckham would read some ‘crazy facts’ about the place, tell them what country/state it was and then the children would color that country/state a particular color. The students did not do any reading as part of their social studies experiences during my eight weeks in the classroom.

I did not observe any science lessons during my eight weeks in the classroom. The closest thing to a science lesson that I observed occurred when the students were working to write adjectives about a bug that they had created during art class. The bug became part of an art exhibit later in the school year (field notes, 4-14-11). The other times that should have included a science lesson were used for lessons with the artist in residence as well as other classroom subjects, such as math and religion. The artist in residence was a poet from the local area and she worked specifically with the third grade classes, but spent time in the other classrooms on at least two occasions.

During my eight weeks in the classroom, there was no content area reading at all. This lack of content area reading is a bit disconcerting considering the fact that the content areas will become so important in these children’s lives in a couple of short years. It is also concerning considering the high emphasis on content area vocabulary in the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) as well as research that clearly explained the lack of informational text in the primary grades and the need for more. Duke (2000) found that students in 20 first grade classmates spent an average of 3.6 minutes a day reading informational text. Encouraging students to read more informational text is essential for their future academic success.
**Teacher actions within the classroom.** Miss Beckham’s actions within the classroom environment were both of a positive and negative nature. Her positive actions were encouraging and exciting students, supporting students, utilizing author studies, and impacting student-student interactions. Some of Miss Beckham’s negative actions that resulted in inadvertently creating barriers to student learning involved the author studies, the student-student interactions and the students’ daily free read time.

*Positive actions.* Miss Beckham incorporated a variety of instructional practices to encourage reading in her second grade classroom. These positive actions involved encouraging her students to become excited about and engaged in the reading process, supporting her students in their efforts to become successful readers, implementing author studies as part of the reading curriculum, and a positive impact on the student-student interactions in the classroom setting.

*Encouraging excitement and engagement.* Excitement about reading and engagement in reading were highly encouraged and promoted in this second grade classroom through a variety of activities and experiences. The stories chosen for two of eight weeks I was in the classroom were based on a theme: Earth Day and Cinco de Mayo. Miss Beckham used stories from either the current reading series or old reading books to help the children delve into the topic at hand. She also had them complete other activities about the topic during center time as well as read books related to the topic throughout the day, such as *Our Tree Named Steve*. Miss Beckham also had the children complete a large variety of graphic organizers based on the books that they read and heard throughout the quarter. These included a cloze story based on the Earth Day text that they had read, a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the reading book and picture book versions of the book *Family Pictures*, a Venn diagram comparing the book and the movie *How
to Eat Fried Worms, book talk papers about a Patricia Polacco book that they read with a partner, and a descriptive paper about the characters in the Piggie and Elephant books.

Teacher support of student growth. Miss Beckham worked hard to support and nourish the literacy development of all of her students, but this support was especially apparent when she worked with the struggling readers. Her support involved encouraging partners to work together during the book talk experience, helping students figure out unknown words during small group reading situations, and helping students pick out appropriate books, such as what she did for Bean and Scully.

Miss Beckham worked to help Bean make better choices of what to do with her “free time.” This guidance came in the form of gentle reminders of what she should be doing, and reminders of what the consequences would be for not following directions and paying attention to classroom routines as well as conversations about the importance of choosing appropriate books. One morning during my second week in the classroom, Miss Beckham chose to have a conversation with Bean about the importance of reading books all the way to the end in order to become a better reader. This conversation occurred because Bean was standing in front of the bookshelf for the second time that day looking for a book to read. Miss Beckham also helped Bean choose a book that was more appropriate for her reading level (field notes, 4-13-11). Bean ended up reading a book from the Junie B. Jones series by Barbara Park for the next 15 minutes and did not want to stop when time was up. She continued reading the same book for the next few days. After finishing that particular book, though, Bean’s habits returned to “normal” and she began avoiding reading on her own again.

On Tuesday, May 17, I noticed Bean reading a new book. She was so engaged in this book that she did not stop reading when the other children returned to the classroom from
reading with the parent volunteer. Miss Beckham had to call her name twice to get her to line up at the door for her turn to go listen to the parent volunteer read the book *How to Eat Fried Worms* by Thomas Rockwell. The following day I had the opportunity to ask Miss Beckham about this change in behavior. She told me about a conversation that she had had with Bean on Monday afternoon. Miss Beckham asked Bean why she didn’t want to read at school. Bean shared that her mom “makes” her read at home and she found it boring. Miss Beckham asked her about the kinds of books that she liked to read and Bean shared that she liked books about girls being silly. After looking on the book shelf for a couple of minutes, Miss Beckham gave Bean some choices of books to read. Bean chose to start reading the Ivy and Bean series by Anne Barrows (field notes, 5-18-11). Bean loved the series so much that she took the book out to recess with her and this is where her self-selected pseudonym came from as well. Although the structure of the literacy environment itself did not entice this child to choose to read, her teacher’s caring actions of working to find books that would catch her interest and engage her helped her to kindle an interest in reading.

Miss Beckham also worked to help Scully choose books, but this was a different kind of situation. Scully did not actively avoid reading the way that Bean would, but he had a tendency to choose books that were either too easy or too difficult for him. Miss Beckham would, therefore, help him choose books that were more appropriate for his reading level (field notes, 5-18-11).

During the Book Talk project, Miss Beckham requested Scully’s partner to help him with his paper as well. Scully’s partner did not appear to like the idea of helping Scully with the project, and I heard him say to Scully, “You can’t just copy” even though they were supposed to have completed the papers together as a team (field notes, 4-20-11). Between the help of his
partner and Miss Beckham, Scully did eventually finish his paper. Anthony had a similar problem while working on his book talk paper. Once finished, his partner asked Miss Beckham what he should do next. She asked who is partner was and then asked him to return and help Anthony continue working so that he could finish more quickly.

*Author studies as part of the reading curriculum.* Author studies were an important way for Miss Beckham to get her students excited about reading books by a variety of authors. Miss Beckham started doing author studies the previous year after she realized that her students did not seem to benefit from the review units in the reading series utilized by the school. During my time in this classroom, the students had the opportunity to explore and become engrossed in the work of three different authors: Steve Jenkins, Patricia Polacco, and Mo Willems. Some of the other authors explored before I entered the classroom included Leo Lionni, Tomie DePaolo, David Shannon and Doreen Cronin.

Miss Beckham’s enthusiasm for the books during their author studies was unparalleled. The feeling of excitement and anticipation in the classroom as the children delved into reading books about animals by Steve Jenkins was hard to believe. Children who usually struggled and avoided reading were enjoying it and experiencing more success than normal. For instance, Scully was able to easily read the word “threatened” while reading a Steve Jenkins book (field notes, 4-8-12). The context of the book and the way in which it was written helped this struggling student be able to easily decode the words in this text. Another example occurred when Bean read with her friend Brenda. As they were reading a Steve Jenkins book together during a designated buddy reading portion of their centers I heard Bean exclaim, “Look at that, it’s an ant” (field notes, 4-7-11). One morning in late May, I observed Bean avidly reading some
books by Mo Willems. It even looked like she was pretending to read to a group of students like she was the teacher (field notes, 5-26-11).

Author studies consisted of Miss Beckham reading a large variety of books by that particular author during classroom read alouds. The children also completed activities based on the author’s books, such as an activity about Steve Jenkins’ book *In Living Color* (field notes, 4-7-11), the book talk papers about the Patricia Polacco book (field notes, 4-18-11), and the paper about Piggie and Elephant during the Mo Willems author study (field notes, 5-25-11).

**Teacher impact on student-student interactions.** Miss Beckham’s actions and language usage had a great impact on the student-student interactions within the setting of her second grade classroom. On a couple of occasions, Miss Beckham encouraged the students to interact with each other, especially when students were completing graphic organizers. For instance, when the students were completing a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the book and the movie, *How to Eat Fried Worms*, Miss Beckham explained the activities as follows: “Here’s what you’re going to do. You are going to work at your tables and you are more than welcome to talk to your neighbors about your ideas, but you are right next to each other so you don’t need to talk loudly. If I hear you talking then you should be talking about *How to Eat Fried Worms* and not anything else” (field notes, 4-29-11). This explanation told the children that they could talk to each other and specifically gave them some parameters: not too loud and only about the book and movie. On another occasion Miss Beckham encouraged and allowed the students to continue talking once they started when they were working on a paper about Mo Willems’ Elephant and Piggie books. She said to them, “I like the discussion I hear because the only talking is about Elephant and Piggie” (5-25-11). Through this simple sentence, Miss Beckham gave the students the opportunity to talk about the papers and these books with their classmates.
**Barriers.** Miss Beckham also inadvertently created barriers in her classroom environment. Three of her actions seemed problematic, and included the difference in the classroom routines, her impact on student-student interactions, and her practices during daily free read time. I explain all in the following sections.

*Author studies as part of the reading curriculum.* The use of author studies in this classroom was highly positive in nature, but some aspects of the experience caused barriers to student learning. An example is the fact that the routine in the classroom was completely different during the weeks that the students read a story out of the reading series than when they participated in an author study. For instance, the students did not define vocabulary words during author study weeks when it was an important part of the classroom routines every Tuesday that the students read a story from the reading series. Some other differences included the fact that students did not meet with Miss Beckham to read a story as a group during author studies like they did when reading a selection from the reading series, such as when they read the story called *Thundercake* out of their reading book. They read the story on Monday, defined vocabulary words on Tuesday, completed a story web about the book on Wednesday, and took a test over it on Friday (field notes, 4-11-11, 4-12-11, 4-13-11, and 4-15-11). Miss Beckham did a lot more read alouds during author study weeks than during other weeks of the year.

*Teacher impact on student-student interactions.* Miss Beckham’s actions and language also served as a way to discourage students from interacting with each other about what they were working on and, therefore, created barriers. This was very apparent when the children were completing comprehension papers. Miss Beckham felt that she needed more reading grades so she had the children complete these papers as part of their reading grade (informal interview, field notes, 5-6-11). She explained to them that they would be reading the text and then
answering the questions. She also made sure to remind them that these papers were for a grade so they should not be talking and sharing answers with each other (field notes, 5-6-11). This explanation seemed to devalue some of the children’s other work where they were allowed and encouraged to interact with each other.

Miss Beckham’s inaction was another way that she influenced the student-student interactions in her classroom. A good example of this occurred during the book talk experience. Because Miss Beckham did not explain to the students what it meant to be partners, many of the students did not understand that they were supposed to work together to complete their book talk papers. This lack of explanation meant that Miss Beckham had to step in and tell Anthony and Scully’s partners to help them finish the paper (field notes, 4-18-11, 4-19-11 and 4-20-11). Since this was a new experience for the students, they needed a more detailed explanation of the activity than just an explanation of how to complete the paper itself.

Although Miss Beckham shared with me that she placed a high value on student-student interactions in the process of helping students become better readers, her classroom actions did not support this belief. Miss Beckham explained that,

I think [student interactions] play a big role in their learning to read because I honestly think I feel like they learn a lot. They learn more from their classmates than sometimes they learn from me. They’re influenced by their classmates. When you pair a struggling reader with an accelerated reader together, it’s pretty amazing what the struggling reader will do to kind of like live up to what they need to do and when they talk about what they’re reading, when they’ll ask each other questions. I think there’s a difference between when a struggling reader is struggling with a word and the accelerated reader
just tells them what it is than just helps them or says, ‘You got it!’ Yeah, I definitely think their friends have a big role in encouraging them. (interview data, 4-21-11)

However, Miss Beckham’s classroom and students rarely showed the kinds of interactions that she talked about above. When students read together, as in buddy reading, the accelerated reader was seldom observed helping the struggling reader figure out a word or encouraging him/her by saying something like, “You did it!” When reading together, the students usually read together and the more accelerated reader usually told the struggling reader the word. They did not talk about what they were reading or ask each other questions about it. Thus there was a mismatch between the way that Miss Beckham talked about student-student interactions and the way students were observed to interact with each other.

Miss Beckham showed more concern about her students’ individual developmental needs than the student-student interactions themselves. This was apparent when she helped Scully complete the paper about Elephant and Piggie rather than encouraging him to talk to classmates about the paper. In some ways Miss Beckham encouraged a lack of student-student interactions because of the fact that she did not show students how to interact with each other appropriately and she did not provide adequate time for them to interact with each other and learn how to communicate with each other around a task.

Free read portion of the centers. The students in Miss Beckham’s second grade class participated in independent reading or “free read” for about 20 minutes at least four times a week during the daily center time. This was a time when students were able to read a book of their choice on their level. They were also able to read anywhere they wanted in the classroom, such as at their desk, on the round rubber mats stored on the bookshelf or on the carpet at the front of the room if it was not being used by others.
Students were expected to read upon the completion of their work, such as when they finished their “Daily Math” papers in the morning or when they finished a reading activity during centers. Miss Beckham showed this expectation to the students through the way that she often reminded some children to read, provided a variety of reading materials, and reported having helped the students learn the routine and expectations early in the school year.

On some days, when all of the students did not have a chance to finish the morning writing activity or other assigned work, Miss Beckham would have the students finish the work during their free read/AR center time. For instance, one Monday morning students were expected to finish the birthday letter that they wrote to a classmate for his/her birthday before they were allowed to start reading on their own (field notes, 5-9-11). This further limited the children’s already limited amount of independent reading time.

Within her second grade classroom, Miss Beckham had an enormous amount of influence over the literacy environment in her classroom. She influenced the physical environment through the centers that she created for the students to participate in during the language arts portion of their school day as well as the materials that she provided for the students’ reading pleasure, including a variety of picture and chapter books. This physical environment was also influenced by the author studies that were completed throughout the school year. The reading materials available to the children would change regularly as the time of year and themes being covered in the science and social studies subject areas changed as well as the author studies changed, too. Miss Beckham would change the materials on the designated open-faced bookshelf using resources from her own personal collection and from the public library. The routines in Miss Beckham’s classroom involved some opportunities for group work as well as many chances to hear quality children’s literature through teacher read alouds and meeting times.
Miss Beckham’s actions had both a positive and negative effect on the literacy environment that she created in her second grade classroom. Miss Beckham worked hard to promote a positive attitude towards reading and worked hard to support her young students through helping them find appropriate books to read on their own and exposing them to a large variety of authors and books through author studies and daily read alouds. Miss Beckham’s actions of requiring students to work on other activities before they could read a book of their choice during center time on some days worked to devalue the importance of reading for pleasure.

**Perceptions and Attitudes about Reading and Learning to Read**

The second category revealed during data analysis involved examining the students’ and teacher’s perceptions and attitudes about reading and learning to read. People’s beliefs and ideas about a concept or activity, such as teaching and learning, can greatly affect how that person will approach that activity. When thinking about a child’s attitude towards reading, it is important to consider this attitude in multiple ways and from different angles. This category of the data analysis examined how the students and the teacher felt about reading, what good reading is and entails, how good reading can be supported by the teacher and others as well as the teacher’s view of herself as a reading instructor and the role of student-student interactions in her classroom.

**Student perceptions.** I examined Anthony, Bartee, Bean, Riley and Scully’s attitudes and feelings about reading, and its importance to them via both semi-structured formal interviews and classroom observations. The attitudes toward reading expressed by the students during the formal interview were then compared and contrasted against what the researcher found during the classroom observations. Students’ feelings about the importance of reading and when they found reading to be interesting were also examined through the interview data.
During the second semi-structured formal interview, the students were also asked to share their ideas on who they think a good reader is and what that person does as a good reader, as well as what their teacher (Miss Beckham) does to help them become better readers. All of these student perceptions have helped the researcher develop a better understanding of how these young struggling readers perceive reading and how they feel about it.

*Attitude towards reading: Self-reported and observational.* When asked how they feel about reading, all five of the focal students described it as being either fun or good. The reasons as to why they felt that way varied from student to student. Scully, for instance, shared that he feels “good” about reading and when asked why he stated, “Because it’s really good to read because then you get more smart, smarter” (interview data, 4-27-11). Bean said, “I feel good about it. I like to read a lot” (interview data, 4-29-11). When asked why she likes to read a lot, Bean stated “because you never know what’s going to happen next in a story and if you read and read and read and then you can know everything” (interview data, 4-29-11). Riley also shared that she felt “good” (interview data, 4-29-11) about reading, but she had trouble verbalizing why she felt that way. During the second interview, I asked her why she felt good about reading and why she said “because it’s fun” (interview data, 5-25-11). After more discussion, and talking about some of the books that she was observed reading (i.e. the *Big Nate* series by Lincoln Peirce and a book about Taylor Swift), she said that she likes the Big Nate books “because they’re funny” (interview data, 5-25-11). When we were talking about the Taylor Swift book she said that you can “learn things” (interview data, 5-25-11).

Anthony and Bartee both shared that they felt that reading is fun. Anthony shared that he thinks that reading is “fun because it can be funny sometimes” (interview data, 4-27-11). Later in the interview I asked Anthony about his favorite kind of book to read at that time. He said
that he enjoyed reading the Geronimo Stilton series by Geronimo Stilton “because it’s so funny” and “he’s traveling in a lot of places and sometimes it’s really dangerous so he says funny words” (interview data, 4-27-11). Bartee shared the most unique response when he was asked about how he felt about reading and what he thinks of reading. He said, “well, reading, I feel like it brings you into a world of imagination and having fun and, well, lots of things” (interview data, 4-27-11). Bartee also shared that he thinks that “reading is fun, more fun than playing or things like that” (interview data, 4-27-11).

Even though all five of the focal students felt that reading was either fun or good and they appeared to love the read-alouds of picture books that their teacher did with them, this positive attitude towards reading did not consistently show through while students participated in classroom activities on a regular basis. Bean is a good example of this phenomenon. Bean shared that she felt that reading was good and that she liked to read a lot. Bean was usually observed avoiding reading during the class’ daily free read time or after finishing her class work by doing things such as going to the bathroom, drinking from her water bottle, wandering the classroom, talking to others and simply sitting at her desk doing nothing in particular. Bean was also seen exhibiting similar behaviors during class read-aloud experiences. Bean was often observed moving around the classroom to do other things, such as get a drink from her water bottle (field notes, 5-3-11) and putting her coat away (field notes, 5-5-11). Based on the interview data, Bean seemed to realize the importance of reading, but struggled with finding books that interested her, as explained in the teacher support section above, and to pay attention when adults were reading from chapter books that required her to listen more closely. Bartee was also seldom observed reading since he struggled to complete his work (and in many cases refused to do it) in a timely manner and received extra help during the class free read time. He
also struggled to pay attention during class read alouds and did other things rather than listening, such as playing with his shoes or other items (field notes, 4-11-11 and 5-3-11).

Anthony and Riley’s attitudes toward reading played out in the classroom literacy environment in positive ways in their classroom routine. Both students were usually observed reading their chosen books every opportunity that they got: following the completion of their Daily Math work in the mornings, during free read time if they did not have other work to do, and after finishing work during center activities. Both of these students also enjoyed the teacher read-aloud experiences and chose to sit close to the front of the group so that they could see and hear Miss Beckham more easily. Anthony even enjoyed sharing connections that he made to the readings during the Steve Jenkins author study.

Scully showed a combination of the two attitudes above. During classroom read aloud experiences, he was usually observed listening to the teacher. He was not often observed reading on his own, though, since he often needed additional assistance to get his work completed.

*Why reading is important: A reason to read.* All five of the focal students realized how important reading can be for them: both inside and outside of the classroom. Bartee, for instance, explained that reading is “more fun than playing or things like that” and that reading “brings you into a world of imagination and having fun” (interview data, 4-27-11). The other focal students shared ideas in relation to what the reader can gain by reading. Scully said that “if you read you always get smarter” (interview data, 4-27-11). Riley explained that reading is important because “you can learn things from it” (interview data, 4-29-11). Anthony also felt that learning was an important result of reading when he shared, “sometimes it gives information about, sometimes people don’t know what can happen if animals don’t exist anymore so that can be dangerous so they try to keep those animals alive” (interview data, 4-27-11). Bean’s
explanation of the importance of reading was also very practical as she shared that it is important “because you need to know how to read to go in grades and finish grades and just go up into another grade” (interview data, 4-29-11). Reading is an important way to learn new information and develop important literacy and academic skills. These struggling readers realize the importance of reading even though they are having difficulty becoming successful readers.

**Times when reading is interesting.** Reading interest is a personal and variable aspect of reading acquisition. It is, however, important for all readers to think about what kinds of books they enjoy reading from time to time and for teachers to help students find and read books of interest within the classroom setting (Hidi, 2001). Bean, for instance, shared that she likes to read when she’s bored. After further prodding, she shared that she enjoyed reading books from the Rainbow Magic Fairies series by Daisy Meadows. As mentioned earlier, Bean did not usually read when she was bored. She actually avoided reading because she found it boring at times. Miss Beckham’s interventions were what finally helped Bean find books and eventually a series of books that she enjoyed reading (field notes, 4-13-11 & 5-17-11).

Anthony, on the other hand, found reading to be interesting and was often observed reading during his free time. During our first formal interview, Anthony shared that he found reading to be most interesting “when it’s about animals” (interview data, 4-27-11). During classroom observations, though, Anthony was usually observed reading the Geronimo Stilton series (field notes, 4-11-11, 4-13-11, 4-19-11, 4-28-11) rather than animal and other nonfiction books with the exception of the week that the students were participating in the Steve Jenkins author study (field notes, 4-4-11, 4-5-11, 4-6-11, 4-7-11, 4-8-11).

Some of the focal students struggled to explain their reading interests so I had to ask additional questions to help them think through the concept of their reading interests. Scully, for
instance, paused and stared when I asked him when he finds reading the most interesting. I, therefore, started talking to him about the author studies that I had witnessed in his classroom up to that point in time: Tomie DePaolo and Leo Lionni before I arrived in the classroom and then Steve Jenkins and Patricia Polacco up to that point in my observations. Scully shared that Patricia Polacco had been his favorite “because she does a lot of detail, and she does really good books and she does a lot of them” (interview data, 4-27-11). During our second interview, Scully shared that his favorite author study had been Mo Willems (which was the most recent author) “because his books are really funny and I like the pig and the elephant” (interview data, 5-26-11). Although Scully shared enjoying reading the books by these two very different authors, he does seem to enjoy reading fiction books. Riley’s answers also required additional questioning. During the first interview, Riley explained to me that she found reading to be the most interesting “when I read fiction books” (interview data, 4-29-11). During the second interview I asked Riley for more information about why she likes to read fiction books “because it’s fun” (interview data, 5-25-11) and after further discussion she shared that she also enjoys reading fiction books “because they’re funny” (interview data, 5-25-11).

*What good readers do.* When thinking about good readers and what good readers do, the five focal students shared a variety of answers, but there were also some commonalities. All five of the students mentioned the importance of reading a lot or even every day to be a good reader. Reading chapter books was also an important indicator of good reading for a couple of the students.

Anthony had a lot to share about the concept of good reading and what good readers do. When I asked him to describe what good readers do, he explained it to me in great detail. He said, “Well, they first practice, practice, practice until they get it right and then if there’s a lot of
noise they’ll just read in their head because practicing makes reading easier like you read a book over and over again it makes you get better at reading” (interview data, 5-26-11). When asked to think about a good reader that he knows and then explain what makes that person a good reader Anthony said, “he just doesn’t have a lot of trouble with his words” (interview data, 5-26-11). He later added, “if they don’t know how to say a word they will break it up into chunks and mostly they’ll go slowly so they don’t miss any part” (interview data, 5-26-11).

Riley and Scully both felt that reading chapter books was an important indicator of a good reader. Riley told me that good readers “read a lot” (interview data, 5-25-11), and when discussing a person who she knew that is a good reader, shared that “she reads a lot and she reads a lot of chapter books” (interview data, 5-25-11). The ability to read chapter books seemed to be an important indicator of being good at reading for Riley because when I asked her what makes her a good reader during her first interview she said, “I used to read little books and now I’m reading a lot of chapter books” (interview data, 4-29-11). Scully feels that a good reader “does a lot of reading and a lot of work like reading work, like practicing your words (interview data, 5-26-11). When I asked him to think about a good reader that he knows and explain why that person was a good reader he explained that he “reads a lot and he reads big books” (interview data, 5-26-11). Scully seems to have a view of good reading as being able to read the words and being able to read big books, i.e. longer chapter books.

Bean feels that reading every day is the most important thing that good readers do (interview data, 5-25-11). Bartee explained that “a good reader is someone who works hard on reading and they get addicted to it and then every day, they might read every day” (interview data, 5-26-11). He went on to explain that a good reader that he knows “reads so much that he
finds out about stuff. Like first he found out about dynamite” (interview data, 5-26-11) showing Bartee’s value on learning from what you read.

**Teacher help in becoming a better reader.** When asked how their teacher helps them become a better reader, all of the students had a different answer, but they all related to what their teacher does to make this classroom a more literate environment. Two students indicated that she helped them figure out words that they don’t know. This most often occurred during the small group reading that occurs during center time. While students read orally to the group, Miss Beckham would tell them the words if they experienced difficulties. Another student shared that he found Miss Beckham’s read-alouds to be an effective way to help him become a better reader. He said that after she read a word then it would help him know what the word was when he read it when he was reading it on his own. The last student shared the most personal connection of how his teacher helps him. He said that she “helps me pick out books that are good for me books” (Scully interview data, 4-25-11). Since Miss Beckham preferred to think of herself as being in the guide role (teacher interview data, 4-21-11), the last perception is the one that most strongly aligns with her self-perceived role in the classroom environment.

When I asked Anthony how Miss Beckham helps him become a better reader, he said, “Well, she reads to us which when we get to that word we can also sound it out” (interview data, 4-27-11). This statement coupled with the fact that Anthony was so attentive during the class read-alouds showed how much Anthony enjoyed being read to by his teacher on a regular basis.

Bean felt that her teacher’s main role was to help her with individual words. She stated that “she just helps us sound out words if we don’t know them” (interview data, 4-29-11). This usually occurred during their small group reading time each Monday when they read the story from the reading book for the first time.
When I asked Riley about what her teacher does to help her become a better reader, she said that “she sometimes reads with us” (interview data, 4-29-11). When I probed further to try and figure out what she does for Riley individually, she said that “she helps us spell out words when we’re having trouble with them” (interview data, 4-29-11). At the time, I assumed that Riley had meant to say “sound out” words, but I questioned her more about this concept during our second interview when we were talking about buddy reading, and Riley explained to me that Miss Beckham (and sometimes a buddy when buddy reading), can help you if “you don’t know what it spells” (interview data, 5-25-11). She went on to say that “they might know and they could help you sound it out” (interview data, 5-25-11).

Miss Beckham also helped Scully develop his reading skills in other ways as well, as evidenced by what he shared when I asked him what Miss Beckham did to help him become a better reader. He said, “She reads with me sometimes, she just helps me pick out books that are good for me sort of books so that I can start reading bigger books” (interview data, 4-27-11). Scully realized that his teacher was there to help him and wanted to help him find some “just right” books to read.

**Teacher perceptions.** Since the classroom teacher has such a huge impact on the classroom literacy environment and how students feel about reading and their reading abilities, it is important to consider her perceptions and views on reading and the act of reading. This section examined Miss Beckham’s views about reading for herself and for her students. The teacher’s conceptualization of her role as a reading teacher and the role of student-student interactions in helping struggling readers were examined through the use of metaphor analysis. The final portion of this section looked at the teacher’s beliefs about reading, her role, and the
role of student-student interactions compared to what the researcher noticed in the classroom literacy environment.

*Teacher views of reading (for herself and her students).* During our semi-structured formal interview, Miss Beckham shared with me her views of reading for both herself and her students. When I asked her “What does reading mean to you? How would you define it?,” she explained to me her views of reading in relation to her students when she said:

> Reading at this age I think is like learning to read. They’re learning to understand the sounds and, it’s kind of a discovery for them at this age. They start not very sure of themselves and then they kind of move into being confident and getting excited about and interested in it and then later it turns into like actually reading to learn. (Interview data, 4-21-11)

This view of reading shows the importance of helping children develop the basics of reading, such as “learning to understand the sounds” and then helping to build their confidence and get excited about reading and even reading particular kinds of books.

I then moved into asking Miss Beckham to explain her views of reading in a different way. I asked, “Can you share a metaphor that you would use to explain what reading is to you?” Miss Beckham shared the following:

> What it is to me? I don’t know about a metaphor, but, to me, I read a lot to stay informed, like I like to read news magazines and I like to read not pop culture books, but like books that are New York Times Bestsellers. So that’s why it’s important to me. It’s always been important in my family. My parents are insane readers so to me it’s just, it’s something that comes with knowledge. It’s something that you do to gain knowledge and
understanding of others and yourself. So I don’t know about a metaphor, but that’s what it means to me. It, I have a high value for reading. (interview data, 4-21-11)

Miss Beckham’s approach to choosing high quality literature, such as *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*, which was the 2011 Caldecott winner (field notes, 5-26-11), to share with her students and her efforts to introduce them to literature by a large number of authors shows how important reading is to her. Her view of reading to stay informed did not carry over into her classroom as well, though. She did not share newspapers or other current events literature with her students.

*Teacher conceptualization of her role as a reading instructor.* “Metaphor analysis is an analytical approach that examines *linguistic metaphors* (that is, the actual metaphors articulated by the participant), and then categorizes these metaphors in terms of *conceptual metaphors* in order to provide some insight into participants’ thought patterns and understandings of a given topic” (Armstrong, 2008, p. 212). Linguistic metaphors or metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs) are what is stated that can be analyzed metaphorically and these speech patterns provide insight into how a person views a given topic. A conceptual metaphor (CM) is the ending category of how the MLE is categorized after analysis. For example, de Guerraro and Villamil (2002) shared the conceptual metaphor of TEACHER AS NURTURER for the linguistic metaphors of nurturer, bee, busy bee and Mother Nature.

Metaphor analysis was used to learn more about how Miss Beckham viewed her role as a reading instructor. The metaphors shared by Miss Beckham about her role as a reading instructor were spontaneous in nature because I did not explicitly ask her to share a metaphor for how she views her role. Since people often talk about abstract concepts using concrete ideas, I felt that Miss Beckham would likely share some metaphors in our conversation. Another reason that I did not pursue the task of explicitly asking Miss Beckham to share a metaphor of her view
of her role as a reading instructor was because she struggled to share a metaphor to explain her view of reading towards the beginning of the interview process.

The first step in analyzing the interview data for spontaneous metaphors was to read through the transcripts and highlight possible metaphors for later analysis. During this process, I found two metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs) that helped to explain Miss Beckham’s view of her role as a reading teacher. The first came from the following interaction:

M: As a reading teacher, what do you see as your role?

B: I kind of, I don’t know, I don’t like to be the dictator in the classroom. I guess I kind of more like to take the guide role and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and their own reading. I don’t like to say to them, “You need to take an AR quiz every day, you need to do this every day.” I like them to take that on themselves. I mean, they’re not going to have somebody doing that for them so I like to be kind of the guide and if I’m reading with them. I love to read out loud to them, but there’s certain times that I think that’s better than others. When I have the chance to read or work with them in a small group, I like to hear them read and guide them through that. If they’re doing an activity, I don’t like to tell them all of the answers or exactly where to find them, I like to respond with a question and say, “Well, where you think you could find that? Where do you think you could get that answer?” to teach them how to problem-solve and do that on their own. (teacher interview data, 4-21-11)

The spontaneous metaphor in this exchange was the fact that Miss Beckham viewed her role of being the reading teacher as being a guide for her students. The next step was to identify the source and target domains for this metaphor. The source was the teacher’s view of being a guide and the target was her role as a reading teacher. The next step was to systematically list ideas
related to the source (the area that helps explain or the concrete concept) domain as shared by the participant and then listing related ideas under the target (the area to be explained or the abstract concept) domain.

Figure 4.1 Source and Target Mappings for Guide versus Reading Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Guide</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reading Teacher</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- assist group members in learning more about the area/topic/location and its history</td>
<td>- assist students in learning more about reading and how to do it (through small group, read-alouds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- urges participants to observe and learn in an interactive and exploratory way.</td>
<td>- urge students to take responsibility for their own learning and their own reading; don’t tell them the answer – help them figure it out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conceptual metaphor (CM) for this excerpt of data is: A READING TEACHER IS A GUIDE. After mapping these source and target concepts, I considered the resulting entailments of this view of the reading instructor. First, a reading teacher guides students to learn more about reading and learning through making observations about the process. A reading teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and reading. While reading in small groups, the reading teacher guides students in their reading by helping them figure out unknown words and asking questions about the story read. A reading teacher helps students figure out answers through questioning.

The other spontaneous metaphor occurred following a similar question.

M: What role do you think you play in your students learning to read?

B: I think the biggest role that I play to be honest would be to excite them about reading. I do think it’s where I’m most effective with them. Like to excite them and say, “I love this author. I’m so excited.” I mean I was ecstatic for Steve Jenkins
week. I love Steve Jenkins week and they knew it. I had been talking about him all year so when that week comes, it’s like Christmas for them. They know I’m excited about it, they’re excited about it. I thought they were so engaged with those books and excited. I think that’s a big role that I play. Even the struggling readers, because of how he writes his books were able to really pick up and read some big words that they may not have been able to read otherwise. I think that’s my main role. I guess maybe that’s the role I like to play, too. (teacher interview data, 4-21-11)

When considering the source and target domains for this exchange, I considered the overall concept of exciting people about something and people who take on that sort of role in our society. Based on this thinking, I came up with the source being: excite them about reading – like a cheerleader while the target was the role Miss Beckham plays in her students learning how to read. The following mappings occurred as a result of this process:

Figure 4.2 Source and Target Mappings for Cheerleader versus Teacher’s Role Metaphor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheerleader</th>
<th>Teacher’s Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- excite fans about the game/team</td>
<td>- excite students about reading or a particular book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- choose cheers the fans will enjoy</td>
<td>- choose relevant books that are of interest to the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- variety of cheers, routines to get fans excited and to keep them engaged</td>
<td>- variety of instructional methods: teacher read-aloud, small group reading, buddy reading, and independent reading to get students excited and keep them engaged and motivated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conceptual metaphor that came out of the mappings of this source to this target was: A READING TEACHER IS A CHEERLEADER. I noted numerous entailments resulting from
this conceptual metaphor. First, a reading teacher works to excite students about reading and sometimes reading a particular book. Choosing relevant, interesting books is an important task for a reading teacher. Utilizing a variety of instructional methods is an important way to excite children about reading and learning how to read.

**Teacher views on student-student interactions and helping struggling readers.** While reviewing the interview data, as explained above, I highlighted possible metaphors to be reviewed and analyzed at a later time. During this process I found two additional MLEs that helped to explain Miss Beckham’s view on the importance of student-student interactions. The first MLE in regards to student-student interactions occurred during the following interaction:

M: How do you help the readers in your classroom who are struggling with learning how to read? Do you make adaptations, modifications or accommodations?

B: I usually talk to Mrs. C about some ideas to do for them. Here I feel like it’s different than a lot of other schools. The struggling readers are still like on the national level fine. So I don’t think that I have a lot of students that need really big accommodations as far as reading goes. I have done that before for students where I’ve made a reading guide that has a highlighted box and they slide it with the words or they’ll use like a ruler and slide down the page and things like that or highlight certain words in a text that they need to pay attention to. I’ve done thinks like that before, not with this group, though. In this group, I think they learn from each other, the ones that are struggling tend to partner well with the ones that are doing well and they kind of pull their abilities up to that level so I like to do that a lot to help those struggling readers. (interview data, 4-21-11)

The spontaneous metaphor in this exchange was the concept that partnering struggling readers with more able readers (student-student interactions) allowed the struggling reader to “pull their
abilities up.” When considering the source and target domains for this MLE, I thought about the overall concept of pulling something up and what takes on that sort of role in our lives. Based on this line of thought, I came up with the source domain being exercise and the target domain being student-student interactions. The following mappings occurred as a result of this process:

Figure 4.3 Source and Target Mappings for Exercise versus Student-student Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Student-student interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- sometimes need a trainer</td>
<td>- need teacher’s help/training to help learn how to do it well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- takes practice to do it well</td>
<td>- need to practice helping and learning together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- need to create a routine</td>
<td>- need consistency in practicing and working together – do it on a regular basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- develop muscles and develop self-confidence</td>
<td>- a way to develop reading skills in a non-threatening way and develop self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conceptual metaphor that came out of the mappings of this source and target was:

STUDENT- STUDENT INTERACTIONS ARE LIKE EXERCISE FOR STRUGGLING READERS. I delineated numerous entailments resulting from this conceptual metaphor. One is that students need some training or help from the teacher in order to learn how to effectively and productively interact with their peers. Students need practice interacting with others as they learn how to help each other and learn together. Consistency in practicing together appropriately and working together is important in order to develop good interactional skills. Working with others is a good way to develop reading skills in a more non-threatening way and a way to help build self-confidence through practicing in front of a peer rather than a larger group of peers and the teacher.
The other MLE that Miss Beckham shared in relation to student-student interactions occurred during the following exchange:

M: What role do you think the interactions students have with each other plays in their learning to read?
B: I think it plays a big role in their learning to read because I honestly feel like they, maybe this is a bad thing, learn a lot more from their classmates than sometimes they learn from me. They’re influenced much more by their classmates and ya know when you pair a struggling reader with an accelerated reader together, it’s pretty amazing what the struggling reader will do to kind of like live up to what they need to do and when they talk about what they’re reading, when they’ll ask each other questions. That was pretty cool today, not that they were doing it as much as I would have liked, but when they were asking like ‘well, what did happen then? And they were asking different questions about the book they hadn’t read yet, showing interest. It was pretty cool to see the interaction back and forth. I think there’s a difference between when a struggling reader is struggling with a word and they, the accelerated reader just tells them what it is than just helps them or like ‘You got it.’ ‘You try it.’ Yeah, I definitely think their friends have a big role in encouraging them.

The spontaneous metaphor within this exchange involved the concept of a struggling reader trying to “live up to what they need to do.” When thinking through this concept and considering the source and target domains, I considered different reasons as to why a person would have to “live up to” something. I, therefore, came up with the source of upward mobility and the target of student-student interactions. The following mappings were created as a result of this thinking.
The conceptual metaphor that resulted from these mapping of these source and target domains was: STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS ARE LIKE UPWARD MOBILITY FOR STRUGGLING READERS. This conceptual metaphor resulted in a couple of entailments. First, catching up in reading is a difficult task to accomplish, but having the support of a more able peer can produce amazing results. Peer influence and help is important to help motivate a struggling reader to do better and keep trying.

Teacher perceptions versus teacher actions and classroom happenings. Through the formal interview, Miss Beckham shared two views of her role as a reading teacher. She views herself as being a guide and a cheerleader in her quest to help her students become better readers. These views of her role were mostly supported by her actions in the classroom as well. Miss Beckham’s role of being a guide was apparent on numerous occasions, but one that stands out was when she was helping Anthony complete a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the version of a story that they had read in their reading book to the actual picture book. Anthony seemed to be having trouble focusing and coming up with ideas so Miss Beckham called him over to her desk and they worked on it together. She asked him questions, such as “and what else, Anthony.” He would answer her and then she would tell him to write it down. They went back and forth like this for a few minutes until Anthony finished the paper (field notes, 5-13-11).
Miss Beckham’s role as a cheerleader was most apparent during her classroom read-alouds and other whole class periods. One such time was when the children returned from recess one day during their Earth Week studies to hear Miss Beckham saying, “Come on in, you’ve got to come here and listen to my favorite story. I love this book” (field notes, 4-28-11). She proceeded to read to them a book called *Our Tree Named Steve* (Zweibel & Catrow, 2005). Her role as a cheerleader was also apparent during the author study of one of her favorite authors, Steve Jenkins. During the morning meeting on Monday of the Steve Jenkins author study week, Miss Beckham told the students the following about him: “I think that he is very creative with his books and I think that you will really like him. I know that you like to learn about animals so you will learn a lot from him” (field notes, 5-4-11). Throughout that entire week students read all kinds of Steve Jenkins books for class assignments and Miss Beckham read and discussed the books with them throughout the day and week as well. The feeling of excitement and anticipation in the classroom as the children delved into reading books about animals by this author was hard to believe. Children who usually struggled and avoided reading were enjoying it and experiencing more success than normal. Part of this excitement came from the anticipation that Miss Beckham had built up by talking about this author leading up to this week of study as well as her enthusiasm for each book that she shared with the children.

In contrast to her view of herself as a guide, Miss Beckham was often observed simply telling her students the words they were reading during their small group instruction time. In fact, I noted in my field notes on April 11 that “Miss Beckham told other more able students the words as well, just like the ones who had trouble and are struggling” (field notes, 4-11-11). On several occasions, I recorded in my field notes that Miss Beckham ‘helped’ a child with words while they were reading in their small group reading center on some Monday mornings. Miss
Beckham helped Riley with some words on April 11, Bartee on April 11, Scully on May 16, and Bean on May 23. On May 16, I noted that Miss Beckham told Riley the word (field notes, 5-16-11) as Riley was figuring out the word. On the same day, Miss Beckham told Bean a word while reading from the reading book and Bean repeated the word. This may have happened in all of these ‘helping’ scenarios, but this was the only time in my field notes that I recorded the fact that the child repeated the word after Miss Beckham told him/her what the word was. Although Miss Beckham valued helping her students figure out answers to questions on papers and during discussions, she did not have the same view of the way that she “helped” them figure out unknown words while reading aloud.

I did not specifically note ways that the student-student interactions helped students in the ways that my metaphor analysis of Miss Beckham’s interview data revealed. Some students appeared to do a little better while reading with a peer, but without using some additional assessment besides observational data I am not able to come to any conclusions about how well the student-student interactions helped Miss Beckham’s students move up in their reading abilities.

I also did not note any specific ways that the student-student interactions served as a form of exercise for the struggling readers. Because Miss Beckham did not train the students in the best ways to interact with each other during buddy reading experiences and other activities where they interacted with each other, her students did not know how to help their classmates figure out words rather than simply telling them what the word was. Even though Miss Beckham shared in the interview that she sees a big difference between “when a struggling reader is struggling with a word and the accelerated read just tells them what it is than just helps them or says ‘You got it’ or ‘You try it’” (interview data, 4-21-11), I did not notice any students displaying these sorts of
behaviors during their buddy reading and other experiences. Another part of this issue of students not knowing how to help each other and interact during buddy reading experiences stems from Miss Beckham’s unintentional modeling that occurred during the small group reading experiences. Her actions showed students that the best way to help someone when he/she has trouble figuring out a word is to tell him/her the word. I did not observe any of the accelerated readers offering the struggling readers encouraging words while they read together. What I usually observed happening was that the accelerated reader told the struggling reader the word. Ben told Scully the words when they were buddy reading their Patricia Polacco book during the book talk experience (field notes, 4-19-11). Steve looked at the word in the book before telling Anthony what it was when they were reading their book talk book together (field notes, 4-18-11). Steve did allow Anthony time to figure out the words when they were reading together as well, though. This probably had to do with how stuck Anthony had gotten on the words in the reading. A couple of the students that I observed buddy reading with the struggling readers would allow these readers more time to try and figure out words while they read together. Jason, Bartee’s book talk partner, was often called upon to work with the struggling readers in the classroom. He worked very hard to help Bartee with his reading by providing him time to try and figure out words on his own without jumping in to tell him the words, as well as trying to help him complete his book talk paper. Jason also helped Scully with some activities and helped him figure out words on some occasions (field notes, 5-13-11 & 5-19-11). One of Riley’s partners also allowed her some wait time while reading together one day. The difference was that Riley said the wrong word and the word was never corrected during the reading (field notes, 5-19-11).
Miss Beckham’s role as a guide and a cheerleader helped to shape her second grade classroom into a great place to learn and develop as a reader. Her students seemed to enjoy the picture books that she chose to share with them as they sat and listened to each word she read. Miss Beckham did not always fulfill her role as a guide in all activities of the classroom setting, but these actions may have been the result of trying to keep the flow of the small group reading experience rather than stopping to help one child decode a word while the other students waited to continue and may have become behavior issues. Because student-student interactions were not an integral part of the regular classroom routine, I was also not able to find much evidence of the student-student interactions acting as upward mobility and exercise despite Miss Beckham’s stated beliefs about the importance of student-student interactions from our formal semi-structured interview.

The When and Why of Student Engagement

The third and final category uncovered during the data analysis process was related to the students’ engagement in their classroom as well as their interactions throughout the school day. A major purpose of this research study was to explore the kinds of interactions that students participated in during the course of literacy-related activities throughout the school day. This category examined the students’ engagement in classroom interactions as well as what they did to show engagement in the reading process and how they avoided reading altogether. The teacher’s guidance in these classroom interactions was also explained.

Classroom interactions. For this study, I observed throughout the Language Arts block each morning and during the Social Studies and Science periods as appropriate. I did not return to the school for the afternoon classes on some occasions because the children were watching a movie or had Chinese class instead of Science. I observed for a total of 37 days over an 8 week
period. This included 36 mornings and 11 afternoons. Perhaps the most striking finding was the lack of student-student interactions. During the eight week period, I observed a total of 18 occurrences of student-student interactions across all of these observations. Some of these occurrences involved the entire class while others involved only a couple of students. These interactions tended to occur in three contexts that were teacher-sanctioned: buddy reading, work with graphic organizers, and during a whole class book talk experience.

**Buddy reading.** Buddy reading served two purposes within this classroom setting. When the class read books from the reading book, it served as a form of repeated reading in preparation for the comprehension test on Fridays. In Roundy and Roundy’s (2009) study of a second grade class and repeated reading, the researchers found “improvements in fluency were positively related to improved reading comprehension” (p. 56). When the class read books by a particular author during their author studies, then buddy reading served as a way to allow more students to read the limited number of books present in the classroom. Miss Beckham also viewed buddy reading and other forms of partner work as a way to help struggling readers. In the formal teacher interview, I asked Miss Beckham, “How do you help the readers in your classroom who are struggling with learning how to read? Do you make adaptations, modifications, or accommodations?” (teacher interview data, 4-21-11). Miss Beckham explained that “I think they learn very well from each other, the ones that are struggling tend to partner well with the ones that are doing well and they kind of pull their abilities up to that level so I like to do that a lot to help those struggling readers” (teacher interview data, 4-21-11). In this classroom, students participated in buddy reading eight times during seven of the eight weeks of the study.
Students participated in buddy reading as a form of repeated reading when the class read text from the reading series. This view of buddy reading was reiterated by Miss Beckham’s instructions and expectations. For instance, on Thursday, May 26, 2011, Miss Beckham explained the activity to the students in this way, “Here’s what we’re going to do. I’m going to partner you up for buddy reading. You need to read the story twice.” On this particular occasion, I recorded the following interaction between Scully and his reading partner, Molly.

Scully was reading fairly well. I think that Scully and Molly decided to read two pages at a time. He was lying on the floor on his back with his head right next to the book and holding the page in his hand as he looked at the story while Molly was reading. He was reading very well really. He had some phrasing happening…as long as he knew the words. I didn’t notice any problems, though. After finishing, they immediately started reading the story again. Sometimes Scully would repeat a phrase as he was reading. This story is divided into short chapters of 2-3 pages each so I think that they were taking turns reading each chapter. Scully knelt looking down at the book as he read the story. He also moved around a lot as he listened to Molly read. He looked at what other students were doing instead of actively listening to Molly read. (field notes, 5-26-11)

During this interaction, the students simply read together. While buddy reading could have been an opportunity to discuss a book with a partner (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002), the students simply read the text together as part of the classroom routine as demonstrated above.

Buddy reading can also be an opportunity for classmates to help another figure out the words in the text (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010), but this didn’t happen in this particular classroom. For example, when Riley read with Emma towards the end of the study, Emma didn’t help Riley with the words at all:
Riley did fairly well as she read her parts. She only had to stop and decode one word, but her reading was a bit halting and slow. During her next turn, Riley read a word wrong, but Emma didn’t catch it because she turned the page so slowly. Riley had trouble with the name of the woman in the story so she skipped them and Emma didn’t correct her. During the next time that she struggled, Emma whispered the words to her (field notes, 5-19-11).

During author studies, buddy reading served as a way to allow more students to read a book by the current author. Since the teacher was not able to obtain 27 books by each author, buddy reading was a way for students to experience more of the books written by a particular author without the need for each child to have a book to read on his/her own. During these times, some of the students interacted with their partners differently than when they buddy read a story from the reading book. Bean had one of those interactions, which happened to be the most authentic student-student interaction revolving around reading observed during this study.

During the Steve Jenkins author study, Bean was reading with her friend, Brenda, and was overheard exclaiming, “Look at that, it’s an ant” (field notes, 4-7-11) while reading the book. Bean’s comment shows how reading for pleasure, such as during the author studies when the students are not preparing for a comprehension test and when the books are of more interest to them, allows the students to think about the context of the story and the pictures and make comments about them.

One afternoon, after the plans for the day had been completed, Miss Beckham allowed the students to choose a Patricia Polacco book to read with a buddy. Bartee chose to read to a couple of high school freshman who had stopped by to visit Miss Beckham. He was very engaged in the reading of this book with these two boys. He paid attention as they read and
talked to them about the book as they read it together. After the boys left, Miss Beckham sat down and finished reading the book with Bartee (field notes, 4-21-11).

The students’ views of buddy reading and how it helped them become better readers also shed some light on this classroom practice. During the first interview, I asked all of the students if talking to others helped them become better readers. I had the following exchange with Scully about this topic:

M: So, do you think that talking to others, like when you’re buddy reading, helps you become a better reader?

S: Yeah.

M: Okay. Can you think of a time when talking to someone helped you?

S: When John read to me. He would, he knew very big words, and he helped me out sounding out whenever I got on a big word. (interview data, 4-27-11)

Because of Scully’s response to this question and my observations of buddy reading in the classroom, I decided to ask the children about this classroom practice in great detail during the second interview. The children’s views of buddy reading and how it can help them become better readers spoke volumes about how they view this teaching strategy. During our second interview, I had an interesting interaction with Bartee about buddy reading and how it helps him to become a better reader.

M: How does buddy reading help you read and become a better reader?

B: You can help your buddy read and it’s like reading to people that’s stupid.

M: So, you can help somebody, but how can reading with a buddy help you, too?

B: Because then you can practice while reading to someone. (interview data, 5-26-11)
Bartee’s last statement showed his understanding that buddy reading helps him practice reading more while also being able to help somebody else when needed. My classroom observations of Bartee did not show how he could help his partner read, though. While reading with a buddy, Bartee was often observed playing with pencils, book covers, looking at other pages in the book and looking around the classroom (field notes, 4-7, 4-18, and 5-19) rather than listening to his buddy read so that he could help him/her read. His behavior may explain why he feels that buddy reading is like “reading to people that’s stupid.”

Scully and Anthony shared some different views of buddy reading and its benefits for their reading. Scully said that, “They help me sound out some words, like, it helps me read better” (interview data, 5-26-11). During our first interview, as discussed earlier, Scully told me about how John helped him sound out words. Anthony, on the other hand, felt that he could help his partner while buddy reading. He did not view it as a way for others to help him read.

M: How does buddy reading help you read and become a better reader?
A: Well, because buddy reading is basically hearing the person read words and if they don’t know how to read you can like give them some time to figure it out but if they don’t figure it out in that time you can just say it to them so they’ll get better at reading.

All of these views of students in the same classroom show how students can interpret the same activity and its benefits for them as students differently.

**Graphic organizers.** Graphic organizers are a way to visually represent and share what was learned. In this classroom, graphic organizers were used six out of the eight weeks of the study as students read books about three different authors and read stories in the reading book during some of the other weeks. These graphic organizers served as a way to explore what was
learned about some of the author’s books in general and in some cases were very specific to a particular book or story in the reading series. In this particular classroom, graphic organizers also served as an effective way to get the children to discuss books. On three separate occasions, the teacher encouraged the students to interact with the other members of their groups in regards to the assignment at hand.

On one occasion the students were given a paper that included clues about characters in the book, *How to Eat Fried Worms*, (Rockwell, 1973) that parent volunteers had been reading aloud to the students. The students were instructed to discuss the clues with their classmates and see if they could figure out the characters. Riley took advantage of this opportunity to work with a member of her group. David had the book and was reading it while Riley repeated the phrase from the paper and they tried to figure out the characters together. Because of so much confusion and uncertainty about this particular paper and the fact that there was only one copy of the book for the children to refer to when trying to figure out which character was being described on the paper, Miss Beckham decided to reread parts of the book to the class and they discussed them as a class (field notes, 4-13-11). Although this activity was meant to engage the students in a meaningful way, the lack of additional copies of the book for students to reference and an overall lack of understanding in how to interact with others caused the students to ask their teacher for help rather than look to each other for additional assistance in completing this paper.

Towards the end of April, the students completed a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the book and the movie *How to Eat Fried Worms*. Miss Beckham told the students that they could work at their tables and talk to their neighbors about their ideas. Many of the students talked to each other as they figured out the various parts of the Venn diagram. Riley looked at the papers of the students around her as she began working. Once in a while, she
would turn to a student near her and discuss the assignment. Anthony talked to another member of his group while working on his paper. Scully tried to figure out some ideas on his own before talking to his group. When I was circulating around the room to see how the students were doing on the paper, he started asking me for help. I told him to ask the other members of his group for help and when he did that sparked a brief conversation about the differences and similarities that they had noticed about the book and movie. Scully wrote some ideas after that discussion.

Eventually, Miss Beckham helped Scully with the paper by asking him questions and then telling him to write (field notes, 4-29-11). During this time, most of the students worked on their own to complete the graphic organizer since that was the interaction style that they were used to the most.

Near the end of the study, the students were completing a graphic organizer about the characters in Mo Willems’ *Piggie and Elephant* books. Miss Beckham did not specifically tell the students that they could talk, but after they began working on the assignment she said to them, “I like the discussion I hear because the only talking I hear is about Elephant and Piggie” (field notes, 5-25-11). Based on the directions given to the students, Miss Beckham had not planned that this would be an opportunity for the students to talk about the books or the assignment. After the students began talking and thinking about the assignment together, she embraced it and even encouraged it once the students began working together to complete this graphic organizer.

*Book talk experience.* The book talks were specifically designed to promote more student-student interactions around books. During one of our informal interviews, I shared with Miss Beckham that I needed to observe more student-student interactions. My goal was to learn more about times during the day when I might be able to observe more student-student
interactions in this classroom rather than to suggest to Miss Beckham that she should do things differently in her classroom because of my research study. However, the end result seemed to be just that. Because of my questions, Miss Beckham decided to create an opportunity for student-student interactions. She told me about a project that she had been thinking about doing with the students. Since their Patricia Polacco author study was approaching, she felt that would be the perfect time to implement this sort of project. She created a “Book Talk Paper” that contained questions that students would answer about their chosen book. During their morning meeting on Monday, April 18, Miss Beckham explained the project to the class.

I’m going to give you a partner to work with. That is going to be your partner for the week. I’m going to guide you and your partner to choose a book. That’s going to be your book for the week. Today you will choose a book and read it by yourself. Then you will read the book with your partner. Then you will complete a book talk paper. (Miss Beckham went over the paper with the students using a book called *Emma and Kate* by Patricia Polacco that she had read to the students the week before as an example as she explained each question to the students). It is important that you answer these questions carefully because on Thursday after we’ve done all of this work, you will talk about your book with others. You won’t get the questions until you’ve read it once by yourself and once with a partner. (field notes, 4-18-11)

Some students interacted while completing the book talk papers, but most completed the book talk papers individually like a typical worksheet assignment. Riley, for instance, was observed lying on the carpet next to her partner as they completed their papers talking softly. Elizabeth (one of Riley’s two partners) would sometimes lean over and help Riley spell a word as she answered the questions (field notes, 4-19-11). John, Bartee’s partner, worked very hard to
help Bartee complete the assignment. He read the questions out loud and tried to talk to Bartee about them. He asked Bartee questions, such as “What’s one more thing about the book?” (field notes, 4-20-11). Anthony and Scully did not work with their partners, but sat next to their partners as they worked. Miss Beckham asked the boys’ partners to help them. Since I was not in a position to hear Miss Beckham’s conversation with either boy’s partner, I do not know exactly what she told them, but the end result was that both boys returned to their respective partners and helped him answer the questions on the paper. It appeared that Miss Beckham’s prompt was aimed at getting the boys to finish their work in a timely manner. Scully’s partner was overheard saying, “You can’t just copy” as he returned to help Scully with the paper (field notes, 4-20-11). Even though the students were told that they would be partners for the rest of the week, not all of the students understood that they should help each other complete the assignment. Since much of the work in the classroom was completed individually, such as Daily Math papers, reading center activities and reading comprehension tests, working together on a paper seemed to be a foreign concept to most of the students in this classroom.

On the day the book talks occurred in small groups, most of the students simply read their answers to the questions on the paper. Few asked questions of their classmates in regards to the book that was read. Bean, on the other hand, was observed doing exactly what one would expect, which was to ask Anthony questions during his book talk, such as “What was her name?” Bartee was also unexpectedly actively involved in the book talk presentations. As his classmates would share information about the book that they had read, Bartee would ask questions, such as “And then what happened?” This was one of the few times that Bartee was truly engaged in a literacy activity that occurred in this classroom (field notes, 4-21-11).
**Unsanctioned student interactions.** Student-student interactions and work completed with a partner also occurred during times when students were supposed to be reading individually or working independently. These sorts of interactions often occurred during the daily center time when Miss Beckham was usually busy working with other students at a different center. She, therefore, was not available to encourage students to either continue working together or return to working individually if that was how she preferred for the activity to be completed.

During free read time, the students were expected to read a book of choice individually, but students were occasionally observed interacting during that time. These interactions may or may not have been related to the task of reading or what the child was reading at that time. Bean was observed interacting with other students on two separate occasions. Towards the beginning of the study, I observed Bean sitting at a group of desks with about 3 other girls. She had a Berenstain Bears book about Easter sitting open on the desk in front of her, and she was conversing quietly with the other girls. When she looked up and saw me watching, though, she quickly went back to looking at/reading the picture book in her hands (field notes, 4-11-11). On another occasion, I observed Bean reading a poetry book with another student during free read time. They sat side-by-side, leaning up against the chalkboard and took turns reading a couple of poems for a few minutes. After about 5 minutes, the other child stood up and went to read individually. Bean read for a couple of minutes and then asked if she could go to the bathroom (field notes, 5-5-11). Riley and Anthony occasionally talked to other students, but they spent the majority of their free read time reading while Bartee and Scully usually left the room to receive additional reading assistance from the Title I teacher (Mrs. C).
During some center activities, Riley was also observed interacting with classmates about what they were doing. On one occasion, Riley was sitting next to her friend, Anna, while completing a cloze activity about an Earth Day text that the class had read in an older reading series. Anna and Riley were talking when Riley said to Anna “What?” and Anna replied, “I’m on air.” Anna proceeded to help Riley find the spot in the book. Riley looked in the book while Anna read the paper out loud and then Riley looked in the book and wrote the answer on her paper. This appeared to be a case of a classmate trying to help another classmate complete her work (field notes, 4-28-11).

Scully also interacted and worked with his peers at times when he should have been working independently. On two different occasions, Scully ‘worked’ with another child while completing a paper during center time. This child helped Scully use the thesaurus and create his adjective book about himself. The two books turned out to be very similar (field notes, 4-13-11). On another occasion, the same child helped Scully complete a Venn diagram about a story called Family Pictures (Garza, 2005). The students read parts of the story in their reading book, Miss Beckham read the entire picture book to the class and then the students were supposed to complete a Venn diagram that compared and contrasted the two versions of the story. Since there was only one copy of the ‘real’ book, the children had to take turns or share the book. Scully and the other child were looking at the book together so they had the opportunity to talk about it and the other child helped Scully write and spell his ideas on the paper (field notes, 5-13-11). These interactions showed Scully’s desire to work with his fellow students when completing work.

On two other occasions I witnessed some very unique interactions involving Scully and some of his classmates. One day during the free read/Accelerated Reader (AR) center, Scully
was not able to get on a computer to take a quiz so he went by the bookshelf, apparently to pick out a book. However, I noticed Scully and another child laying side-by-side on the floor looking intently at a book and talking about it. I moved closer to the two boys to hear their interactions, and overhead one say to the other, “I spy something gray” and then the other started guessing and pointing to items in the book. I noticed Scully playing the exact same game with another child on another occasion. They played this game with this particular book on a regular basis once they realized how fun it could be (field notes, 5-10-11 and 5-24-11).

One morning towards the end of my observations, I entered the classroom to find Scully and two other boys excitedly looking at and discussing a book. Before I could stop and interact with them, they got up and moved to another location since that was the area that I usually sat in to observe the classroom activities. When I asked Scully what they had been doing, he started to tell me that they had been reading earlier. I quickly assured him that I wasn’t the “Reading Police” and he smiled as he told me that they were just looking at the book. Upon further investigation using the internet, I figured out that they had been looking at a *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* journal book that one of the boys had purchased at the book fair the week before. All three of the boys were highly engaged in their conversation until I entered the classroom and disrupted their activities. I never did fully learn what they had been doing besides looking at it together.

In Miss Beckham’s second grade classroom, the students were allowed to interact with their classmates during buddy reading, while completing graphic organizers, and while participating in a book talk experience. Additional interactions occurred at times that were not sanctioned or encouraged by the teacher. The lack of interactions in this classroom will be discussed and examined in detail in the conclusions portion of this dissertation (chapter 5).
**Student perceptions of interactions.** During the first semi-structured formal interview, I asked each of the focal students how often they were allowed to talk to their classmates. All five of the students were confused by the question and required additional questioning to help them fully understand what I was trying to ask of them. In the end, the students basically told me that they do not get to talk to their classmates about what they are reading very often, if at all, and that when they are buddy reading is one of the few times that they may be able to talk to their classmates about what they are reading in class.

“Do you think that talking to others helps you become a better reader?” was another question that I asked of the students during the semi-structured formal interview. All five of the focal students felt that talking to others helps them become a better reader, but only two of them were able to articulate an explanation of why they felt that way. Scully shared with me that “when Jack read to me” (interview data, 4-27-11) was a time when talking and reading with a classmate helped him. He went on to say that, “He would, he knew very big words, and he helped me out sounding out whenever I got on a big word” (interview data, 4-27-11). Another said that talking to others sometimes helps him become a better reader if “it’s good information” (interview data, 4-27-11). These examples show the importance of helping children understand why they are allowed and able to interact with their classmates.

**Teacher guidance.** The guidance that the students in Miss Beckham’s classroom received helped them to complete the work for the day and function in the daily life of the classroom. This guidance did not involve specific instructions or demonstrations about how to interact with each other effectively, though.

Miss Beckham’s directions about buddy reading towards the end of the study showed that she did not feel the students needed much of any kind of an explanation of what to do for this
activity. She stated, “Here’s what we’re going to do. I’m going to partner you up for buddy reading. You need to read the story twice” (field notes, 5-26-11). This explanation told the students that they would be reading the story from the book twice, but did not give them any direction for interactions beyond the reading, such as how to help a classmate when he/she had trouble with a word.

Miss Beckham’s explanation of some of the graphic organizer assignments did allow for the students to interact with each other, but the students were not given any guidance in the best ways to do this. Each child was expected to complete and turn in the work so the interaction part of the assignment was up to them. First, she explained to the children how to complete the Venn diagram that compared and contrasted the book and movie *How to Eat Fried Worms*. During this discussion, the class discussed specific ideas of what could be written in each part of the Venn diagram. The final directions included, “Here’s what you’re going to do. You are going to work at your tables and you are more than welcome to talk to your neighbors about your ideas, but you are right next to each other so you don’t need to talk loudly. If I hear you talking then you should be talking about *How to Eat Fried Worms* and not anything else” (field notes, 4-29-11). This was one of the only times that Miss Beckham encouraged the students to interact with each other revolving around an assignment. The students did not know how to take full advantage of this opportunity, though, because they were not accustomed to being allowed to talk to each other. On another occasion, the students began talking to each other while working on a graphic organizer about Mo Willems’ Elephant and Piggie books. When the students were given the assignment, Miss Beckham did not specifically encourage them to talk to each other. After walking around the classroom for a minute, though, Miss Beckham said the following to her students, “I like the discussion that I hear because the only talking I hear is about Elephant
and Piggie” (field notes, 5-25-11). This allowed the children the opportunity to talk and share ideas with each other, but did not give them any tools of how to do that effectively.

The book talk experience was another example of a time when Miss Beckham did not guide her students enough to help them effectively interact with each other and work together. During the explanation of the book talk, Miss Beckham told the children that they would be reading a book with a partner and completing a book talk paper. She did not tell them that they should have the same or similar answers. Also, some of the questions on the Patricia Polacco Book Talk paper (see Appendix N) were personal questions, such as “Does the setting remind you of a place you have been? Where? and Which character did you connect with? Why?” (book talk paper, Appendix N). These sorts of questions did not lend themselves to lengthy conversations among partners. They encouraged the students to complete the work on their own. On the day that the book talks occurred, Miss Beckham gave the children a further explanation of what they would be doing when they met in groups to share their book talk paper. She said, “You will have your book and your paper. You will basically sell your book. You will say, ‘Hey guys you need to read this book because… Don’t give away the ending, though, especially if it has a surprise ending” (field notes, 4-21-11). Miss Beckham further explained how this should be done using the book Emma Kate that she had used on Monday to explain to the children how to complete the paper. Because the children had spent the week completing the paper of questions about their book and not trying to figure out what to say to “sell” their book, most of the children simply read their papers when meeting with their small groups for the book talk time. All of the students, but especially the struggling readers, needed some additional guidance from Miss Beckham to help them fully understand what they would be doing during the actual book talk.
Overall, Miss Beckham’s actions and language both encouraged and discouraged student-student interactions from occurring in her second grade classroom. Her interview shows that she valued allowing students to talk and work with each other, but her classroom persona did not encourage that to happen. Miss Beckham showed more concern about her students’ individual developmental needs than the student-student interactions themselves. This was apparent when she helped Scully complete the paper about Elephant and Piggie rather than encouraging him to talk to classmates about the paper. In some ways Miss Beckham encouraged a lack of student-student interactions because of the fact that she did not show students how to interact with each other appropriately and she did not provide adequate time for them to interact with each other and learn how to communicate with each other around a task.

Ways students show engagement in reading. Although the focal students in this research study were struggling readers, they still engaged in the reading process on a regular basis. Through the data analysis process, I found four different ways that the students showed their engagement in and enjoyment of reading. The first act of engagement was to choose to read upon the completion of an assignment. Riley and Anthony showed this form of engagement the most. Both of these students would retrieve a book shortly after finishing their Daily Math worksheets each morning. Anthony was observed to read a book after finishing his work on nine occasions (field notes, 4-4, 4-15, 4-29, 5-4, 5-6, 6-11, 5-12, 5-13, 5-18) while Riley was observed to do the same on eleven occasions (field notes, 4-6, 4-11, 5-2, 5-4, 5-6, 5-10, 5-13, 5-16, 5-17, 5-20, 5-24). Riley also enjoyed talking to her classmates about “random stuff” (interview data, 5-25-11) after finishing her work on some occasions so her numbers could be higher, and Anthony took quite a bit of time to finish some assignments before being able to read. Since Bean had a tendency to avoid reading, she was only observed reading as soon as she
finished her work on a couple of occasions (field notes, 5-20, 5-23). Sully struggled to complete his work without additional teacher help so he was only observed reading following the completion of his work on a couple of occasions as well (field notes, 4-12, 5-17). Because Bartee was so defiant in the completion of most assignments, he was seldom observed reading after completing his work because his work was seldom finished within the time constraints of the classroom setting.

Some of the focal students used their finger to track the text while reading out loud in a small group or with a buddy. Anthony did this on three occasions (field notes, 4-7, 5-6, and 5-18). Sully did the same on two occasions as well (field notes, 5-9, 5-19). This simple action seemed to help these struggling readers keep track of what they were reading during those partner and small group contexts. Riley, on the other hand, was observed tracking the text with her finger and even mouthing the words while she was reading silently at her desk (field notes, 5-2, 5-4, 5-18, 5-19). Although I’m unsure of why she engaged in this behavior, I think that it may have had something to do with keeping herself focused on the task while others were talking and making noise around her.

Another way that the students showed their engagement during the reading tasks occurred when the students read with others. Four of the five focal students consistently followed along and looked at the book while reading with others. The students likely did this on more occasions, but I specifically noted these behaviors in my field notes on some occasions. Bean did well with this on two occasions (field notes, 4-7, 5-19) while Riley did well on more (field notes, 4-7, 4-19, 4-26, 5-3, 5-19). I noted Anthony (field notes, 4-7, 5-18) and Scully (field notes, 5-9, 5-19) doing well on two occasions as well. Bartee usually played with other things,
such as the cover on his reading book (field notes, 5-19) and a tear in the classroom carpet (field notes, 4-18).

A final way that the students showed an enjoyment of and engagement in reading was to read during the daily free read/AR center. I observed Anthony reading during this time on numerous occasions (field notes, 4-11, 4-13, 4-19, 4-28, and 5-26). Bean was observed occasionally, but she was very inconsistent because she usually displayed avoidance behaviors during this time. Bean was observed reading for enjoyment once (field notes, 5-19) and ‘reading’ while sitting with a group of other students once (field notes, 4-11-11). I only specifically noted Riley reading during her free read center on a couple of occasions (field notes, 5-18, 5-19, 5-23), but she was observed taking AR quizzes (field notes, 4-28-11, 5-5-11, ) and because of her other behaviors, I am sure that she read during her free read center on a regular basis. Scully and Bartee were not observed reading during their free read center because they left the classroom for additional reading assistance during that time each day. Miss Beckham intentionally scheduled their centers in such a way so that they did not have any work to make up from working with Mrs. C on reading skills.

**Ways students avoid reading.** The focal students in this classroom avoided reading and doing work in a number of ways on a daily basis. Bartee avoided doing work of any kind and was a major behavior problem in this classroom overall. Because he was not specifically avoiding reading, I have chosen not to include most of his avoidance behaviors in this section. He did, however, play with items (stress ball, book cover, rubber mats to sit on, and rips in the carpet) when he should have been either reading or listening to a buddy read (field notes, 4-12, 4-18, 4-20, 5-19). Bean was the mastermind of reading avoidance behaviors. She asked to go to the bathroom during her free read time or after completing her work on six occasions (field
notes, 4-6, 4-29, 5-4, 5-5, 5-12, 5-26). On at least five occasions, I noted Bean talking to her classmates instead of reading (field notes, 4-4, 4-6, 4-7, 4-12, 5-4). Riley was also observed talking to her neighbors after finishing her Daily Math work on six occasions (field notes, 4-5, 4-6, 4-27, 5-4, 5-10, 5-18). Because the conversations did not last long and Riley was observed reading within a short period of time, I do not consider Riley to be a struggling reader with a lot of avoidance tendencies. I noticed Bean (field notes, 5-4, 5-13) and Scully (field notes, 5-3, 5-11) wandering the classroom instead of working or reading on two occasions each. Bean was also observed to be ‘fake’ reading or sitting at her desk doing nothing on three occasions (field notes, 4-6, 5-6, 5-24). Bean’s avoidance behaviors seemed to be due to the fact that she was struggling with finding a book that she enjoyed reading. As explained earlier, Bean’s avoidance behaviors changed towards the end of the research study after Miss Beckham talked to Bean about her lack of reading during school and helped her find a series of books that Bean enjoyed and looked forward to reading (field notes, 5-24-11). Because Scully struggled to complete the classroom assignments without teacher assistance and reassurance, I did not record Scully’s behaviors as being avoidance tactics even though I seldom saw him reading a book on his own.

Summary

The analysis of the observation and interview data in this research study resulted in the creation of three themes. The first theme was “The Literacy Environment and the Teacher’s Influence”. Within this theme, the physical environment, routines of the classroom and the teacher’s actions within the classroom environment were explored and explained in greater detail. The physical environment included the materials available to the students to further their reading progress as well as the centers that were provided within this classroom setting to help the students continue to grow and develop. The routines in this classroom included partner and
group work experiences, teacher read aloud times, and whole-class meeting times. The section about the teacher’s actions within the classroom setting explained Miss Beckham’s positive actions and unintentional barriers that affected the literacy environment within her classroom. The positive aspects of Miss Beckham’s actions included encouraging excitement and engagement in reading, supporting the literacy growth and development of her students, including author studies as part of the reading curriculum, and having a positive impact that encouraged student-student interactions within her classroom environment. Some of Miss Beckham’s inadvertent barriers included how the author studies were included in the classroom setting, causing barriers that sometimes discouraged student-student interactions in this classroom, and disturbing students’ opportunities to fully participate in the free read portion of the center activities on some occasions.

The second theme uncovered during data analysis was “Perceptions and Attitude about Reading and Learning to Read.” This theme involved exploring the student and teacher perceptions of reading. Students’ attitudes about reading were explored through both interviews and observational data. Students’ views on why reading is important and when they find reading to be the most interesting were also explored through the use of the interview process. Interviews also allowed me to learn more about what these struggling readers felt that good readers do as part of being a good reader and how their teacher helps them in the process of becoming a better reader. All of this information helped me understand a struggling reader’s view of reading through a different lens. Miss Beckham’s perceptions about reading were also explored. This section discussed how the teacher views reading for her students at this age and level of development as well as reading for herself as an adult. Miss Beckham’s conceptualizations of her role as a reading instructor were also explored using metaphor analysis.
to examine the interview data, which resulted in the uncovering of Miss Beckham’s view of herself as a reading teacher as being like a guide and a cheerleader. The teacher’s views of student-student interactions and how they help struggling readers were also explored using metaphor analysis. This analysis resulted in viewing student-student interactions as a form of exercise and upward mobility for struggling readers. The final section of this theme looked at how Miss Beckham’s views differed from what I found in the classroom setting based on her actions and the day-to-day life of this second grade classroom.

The final theme that resulted from the analysis of the observational and interview data was “The When and Why of Student Engagement.” This theme examined the classroom interactions, the teacher’s guidance for those interactions, and ways that students avoid and engage in the reading process. In this classroom, the interactions largely occurred in four contexts: during buddy reading, while completing graphic organizers, throughout a book talk experience, and at unsanctioned times. During buddy reading experiences, most of the focal students simply read with their partners and did not discuss the text in any way. A great deal of conversation occurred as students worked on completing a couple of graphic organizers, especially when the teacher explained the activity as a chance for them to discuss the paper with their neighbors and commented on the positive aspects of what she heard on another occasion. Student-student interactions did not occur as much as expected during a book talk experience. While working on the book talk papers with partners, two of the five focal students did not talk to their partner at all. Most of the students simply read from their book talk paper and did not ask many questions of their classmates during that experience. Unsanctioned interactions were common in this classroom since the students interacted with each other about assignments during the daily center activities when Miss Beckham was busy working with other students. For
instance, Scully was observed working with a classmate to complete a Venn diagram comparing two versions of a book that they had read and had read to them during class that particular week. The teacher’s guidance involved a great deal of explanation of how to complete the required assignments, such as how to complete the book talk paper. The teacher did not offer the students guidance in the best ways to interact with their peers revolving around this experience. The students in this classroom did a number of things to show their engagement in the act of reading, such as reading whenever they had a chance, i.e. after work was completed and during the daily free read time. Students also showed their engagement in this process by running their fingers under words while reading (both silently and out loud) and by following along in the book when they read with a partner. These students also showed a number of avoidance strategies, including going to the bathroom, talking to classmates, walking around the classroom, and pretending to read while looking around the classroom at what other students were doing.

Although this classroom did not include a great deal of student-student interaction opportunities, the students in this classroom were provided with numerous opportunities to learn about reading and how to read in a supportive and nurturing environment. In chapter five, these findings will be discussed more conclusively as each research question is answered using the data explained here. The next chapter will also include a discussion of implications for teacher preparation, teacher professional development, school districts, parents and me, as the researcher. A discussion of areas for further research and the limitations of this study will also be included in the final chapter of this dissertation.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This research study was designed to explore the interactions of struggling readers in a second grade classroom. In addition to exploring those interactions, the effect of the literacy environment, teacher impact on the student interactions, how the teacher views her role as a reading instructor, and student perceptions of good reading and teacher support were explored. The beginning portion of this chapter will discuss conclusions drawn from the findings based on the research questions. The next portion of this chapter will describe and explain two major themes in more detail. This section will be followed by a discussion of implications for teacher preparation and professional development, teacher practice, school districts, parents, and me, as the researcher, and suggestions for future research as well as limitations of the present study.

Conclusions

Conclusions Based on Research Questions

Question 1: What is the nature of student interactions within literacy events for struggling readers in a second grade classroom? As explained previously, analyzing the student-student interactions was a major purpose for this research study. These interactions were both very teacher directed, and limited in scope and frequency. I (as the researcher) also influenced the occurrence of the interactions through both my very presence in the classroom as well as through unintentional influence on the teacher’s choice of classroom activities. Contextual factors related to the school and community also influenced the student-student interactions in this classroom.
**Teacher directed.** The student-student interactions that occurred in Miss Beckham’s classroom were highly guided and regulated by Miss Beckham’s actions and instructions. These highly structured opportunities to talk and interact with classmates occurred at times when the teacher instructed the class to interact with each other and were limited to only certain times of the day. These interactions were also limited to only occur revolving around certain activities, such as during buddy reading, while completing graphic organizers, during a book talk experience, and at other times that were unsanctioned by the teacher and, therefore, not interrupted by her influence.

**Limited in Scope and Frequency.** As noted in the findings, student-student interactions only occurred 18 times during my eight weeks in the second grade classroom. Although Miss Beckham shared that she finds these interactions to be highly valuable for her students, she did not provide them with the opportunity or scaffolding necessary to fully interact in focused and productive ways. Within this classroom setting, the most productive and lively student interactions occurred during the completion of graphic organizers. This was almost the only time that Miss Beckham encouraged her students to interact with each other while completing an assignment. While completing most assignments, students were expected to work individually without bothering others. This was especially true for assignments, such as comprehension tests, that would be collected for a grade. This realization of how rare the interactions revolving around these graphic organizers were helped me to understand why students struggled to interact with each other while working on their book talk papers. Interactions and working together to complete an assignment were not encouraged or promoted in the classroom so students did not know and/or understand how to participate in them fully.
Although buddy reading occurred on a regular basis in this classroom setting, it appeared to be used more as a repeated reading experience (Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley & Stahl, 2004) when reading from the reading book than an opportunity to read, talk about the book and practice reading strategies (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002). This stance towards buddy reading was reiterated by Miss Beckham when she explained to students, “Here’s what we’re going to do. I’m going to partner you up for buddy reading. You need to read the story twice” (field notes, 5-26-1).

Vygostky (1993) emphasized the importance of social interactions while learning. Other scholars, including Schmidt (2008), Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), Cazden (2001), and Wells and Wells (1984) have all emphasized the importance of allowing students to talk as they are learning, especially during the process of reading and learning how to read. With this in mind, it is important for teachers like Miss Beckham to act on their beliefs in all areas of their classroom environment. Based on the interview data, Miss Beckham clearly believed that student-student interactions were important for her students’ development as readers, but she did not make that belief an important part of her classroom atmosphere or instructional practices.

**Researcher influence.** As explained in the methodology and findings portions of this dissertation, I, as the researcher, inadvertently influenced the student-student interactions in this second grade classroom. As explained in chapter 3, I influenced the classroom culture in little ways through informally asking Miss Beckham questions about her classroom practices, such as the usage of the *Daily Oral Language* book, and simply being present as a reminder that I was looking at the student-student interactions within the classroom setting. I also influenced the classroom activities themselves. As explained in chapter 4, the book talk paper was a result of the fact that I shared with Miss Beckham that I wanted and needed to observe more student-
student interactions. My questioning resulted in Miss Beckham creating an activity that she hoped would result in the children interacting with each other more. Although my intention was not to ask Miss Beckham to change her lesson plans or the way that she helped her students grow and develop as readers, the end result was that I did influence the culture of this classroom and even caused new activities and experiences to be implemented into the classroom setting because of my research endeavors.

**Contextual influences.** The context of a school and community has a great impact on a classroom culture and a teacher’s activities and choice. Lighting the Way School is a Catholic school located in a fairly conservative major Midwestern city. The school, church and community stakeholders all have expectations of what will and will not occur in the classroom setting. Some of these unwritten and unspoken expectations involved how loud a classroom was expected to be and what the children should be expected to do in the classroom setting. Miss Beckham, therefore, was only able to implement some differences in her classroom as compared to what previous teachers had done and what other classroom teachers were doing. This culture, coupled with the fact that Miss Beckham was only in her third year of teaching, greatly affected the amount of effective and productive student-student interactional experiences that Miss Beckham was able to implement in her second grade classroom. More experience and personal interactions with others who also valued allowing students to interact with each other would likely influence how Miss Beckham sets up her classroom.

**Differing perspectives.** In this particular classroom, the students’ views on how often they were allowed to interact with their peers differed from the teacher’s views on the importance of student-student interactions. Most of the students stated that they were not allowed to talk to their peers about what they had read, and when they could talk it was in the
buddy reading format. Miss Beckham, on the other hand, expressed a view that interactions are important for the students’ development. My observations of buddy reading showed an understanding of buddy reading that simply involved reading without the need to talk to each other about the text and to usually tell a classmate a word while reading much like Miss Beckham did with them during small group reading experiences.

Based on my experiences of observing in this classroom and interacting with the teacher and focal participants, teachers need to make their expectations explicit. If the children are supposed to talk to each other and interact while reading then the children need to be taught how to do that. Teachers can provide models and demonstrations to engage children in developing an understanding of what buddy reading should include. If the teacher wants the more accelerated reader to do more than just read with a classmate then the teacher needs to help the children understand their role through minilessons on what a good buddy reading scenario looks like. Just thinking buddy reading is a good idea but not implementing it in the classroom is not enough. It is essential that teachers help children learn how to engage in the process of talking with their classmates.

**Question 2: How does the literacy environment influence the struggling readers’ attitudes toward, engagement in, and avoidance of reading in this classroom?** The literacy environment, including the physical aspects of the classroom, Miss Beckham’s actions and the classroom routines, seemed to greatly influence the attitudes, engagement, and avoidance of the students in this classroom. This section will explain conclusions developed based on how the literacy environment in this classroom influenced students’ attitudes toward reading, engagement in reading and avoidance of reading throughout this research study.
Attitude towards reading. All five of the focal students reported liking reading and feeling that they were good readers. The books, procedures and routines within this literacy environment helped to encourage Anthony and Riley to read whenever they finished their work and during the free read time each day. These students knew and understood that reading was a valued activity in their classroom setting. Some focal students’ attitudes toward reading were strikingly different during author study weeks than during the weeks when the children read a story from the reading book. Bean was more likely to read books on her own from the collection of author study books than she was to choose books off of the classroom book shelf.

Engagement in reading. Miss Beckham, as a part of the literacy environment, was able to help students, such as Bean and Scully find appropriate books to read during their free time. Miss Beckham’s efforts were crucial in helping Bean become an engaged reader, even if it was only for the brief period of time that she was reading the Ivy and Bean series. Miss Beckham’s efforts to help Scully find an appropriate book were also noteworthy since that is what Scully shared as the main way that she helps him to become a better reader (interview notes, 4-21-11).

The use of author studies as part of the literacy environment helped to promote greater engagement of some of Miss Beckham’s more reluctant readers. Scully being able to read difficult words while reading books that were of interest to him, and Bean sitting on the floor by the book shelf reading all of the Mo Willems books present at the time show how exposing children to a variety of authors, genres and types of books helps children become more engaged in the reading process.

Miss Beckham’s read alouds of books during their author studies and chapter books at other times of the day helped to engage her students in the study at hand and made them want to read the books by this author during their free time. This also served as a way to engage students
in the concept that reading books can be enjoyable, which helps to promote a better attitude towards reading in general and a desire to improve one’s own ability in order to read the books provided within the classroom setting. The literacy environment as a whole (physical aspects, human behavior and routines) encouraged these struggling readers to engage in the act of reading on a regular basis.

*Avoidance of reading.* All of the focal students’ positive attitudes did not play out as clearly in the classroom setting. Bean employed numerous avoidance strategies throughout this research study, unless she was able to find books that were of interest to her during author studies or when Miss Beckham intervened to help her find appropriate reading material.

Other aspects of the classroom worked to discourage the struggling readers from engaging in the act of reading on a regular basis. Scully and Bartee missed the free read/AR center time on a daily basis as they were pulled from the classroom to receive additional help in reading. Miss Beckham’s reasoning for doing it this way was so that the boys did not have any work to make up during the time that they spend receiving extra help, but the result was that the boys did not have much time to read books of choice on their own. Another aspect of the classroom that discouraged some of the students from engaging in reading was a lack of organization in the books present. All of the books in the classroom were placed on book shelves organized by author, but by no other apparent system. There were picture books present, but there did not seem to be a large number of nonfiction materials available to the students. The books for the author studies, on the other hand, were displayed in a front facing book shelf that allowed the students to easily view and choose a book that they wanted to try reading.

**Question 3: How does the teacher conceptualize her role as a reading instructor?** As explained in chapter 4, Miss Beckham viewed herself as having the roles of guide and
cheerleader. She felt that helping guide her students toward finding appropriate books, helping them figure out answers on papers through questioning, and helping them to become more independent and self-directed were important roles that she played. Despite her view of herself in this role and some of her actions in the classroom setting that displayed this role, Miss Beckham also did things that contradicted this role. For instance, she told the children a word if they struggled with it during their small group reading sessions (field notes, 4-11-11). I even noted that she told all of her students the words that they struggled to decode, not just the struggling readers who had difficulty with words. This form of instruction goes against Miss Beckham’s view of herself as a guide who helped her students find the answers to questions and problems on their own.

Miss Beckham’s favorite role was definitely being a cheerleader. She really enjoyed getting her students excited about reading by sharing interesting and pertinent books. She loved reading out loud and helping them to appreciate good literature. The use of author studies as a supplement to the reading series was a great way that Miss Beckham helped her students to become more excited about reading and to experience a larger variety of quality literature.

The problem with Miss Beckham’s roles being that of a guide and a cheerleader is that both of these roles put her on the sidelines, watching the action from afar. This means that Miss Beckham did not see modeling how to interact appropriately as part of her role as the teacher. Modeling and guided practice were a limited part of Miss Beckham’s teaching strategies that I observed. Any paper or activity that the students were asked to complete was discussed as whole class while the students were sitting on the carpet. Miss Beckham would use examples and ideas to explain the activity to the students before asking them to complete it on their own.
**Question 4: In what ways does the teacher influence the student interactions during structured literacy-related events throughout the school day?** Miss Beckham’s influence on how her students interacted with each other during literacy-related events both encouraged students to interact with each other while some instructional practices and routines included in Miss Beckham’s classroom also worked as a way to create barriers to student-student interactions. Miss Beckham encouraged her students to interact with each other under specific circumstances. Her students participated in buddy reading on a weekly basis. Under some circumstances, buddy reading can be a wonderful opportunity for students to help each other develop reading skills and discuss the book further to aid comprehension and understanding of the text (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002). In this classroom, however, buddy reading served as a way to read the book in a different way to prepare for the individual comprehension test on Friday. The students were not taught how to help each other figure out unknown words or how to discuss the book with a classmate.

Miss Beckham encouraged her students to talk when completing open-ended graphic organizers, but did not model how this sort of interaction looks. The students, therefore, often just copied from each other and did not work collaboratively to figure out the answers together. The inclusion of the book talk experience was another way that Miss Beckham tried to encourage student-student interactions in her classroom. This experience was designed to promote some interactions among the students while completing the papers and again when they shared about the book that they had read. She did not, however, fully explain to the students how they should interact with each other while completing the paper or when they were sharing about the book in the small groups. When talking about the book, most of the students simply read their book talk paper to their classmates rather than explaining what the book was about and
why it is a good book to read. Miss Beckham also did not encourage cooperative learning projects. Working on projects collaboratively periodically would help students understand how they should interact with each other and what a value this sort of interaction could be for their learning.

Another way that Miss Beckham inadvertently created barriers for her students’ participation in student-student interactions was in the way that she talked about some assignments. When the students were completing individual assignments that were “for a grade,” Miss Beckham made sure to remind them that they should be working by themselves without talking to others. This explanation and directions seemed to devalue some of the papers and other activities that the students were allowed and encouraged to interact with their peers in regards to, such as the graphic organizers.

**Question 5: How do the students conceptualize what it means to be a good reader and how their teacher helps them become better readers?** The five focal students in this study shared some great ideas of what they feel it means to be a good reader. These students felt that the two of the biggest indications that a person is a good reader are if they read a lot and if they read chapter books. These students understood the importance of reading to become a better reader and that a chapter book is an indication that a person can read more difficult text. None of the students mentioned anything about understanding what was read, though. Comprehension of a story was not important to them in terms of what it takes to be a good reader.

The students shared differing ideas of how their teacher helped them become better readers. The most common thought was that she helped them figure out unknown words when they had problems. They also felt that reading out loud to them and with them were important
things that their teacher did. None of these students shared any ideas related to helping them understand what they had read or teaching them strategies of some sort that they could use in future reading efforts. They shared ideas of what she does to help them in the immediate situation.

**Implications**

The findings from this research have a number of implications for teacher preparation and professional development, teacher practice, school districts, parents and even me, as the researcher, related to improving literacy experiences for the students that we teach. Suggestions for teacher preparation and professional development are to consider the importance of student-student interactions in the classroom setting, the significance of the literacy environment, personal beliefs about reading and being a reading teacher, and the value of content area reading. Implications for teacher practice include promoting and explicitly showing the students how to interact together, sustain a positive literacy environment, and examine views of classroom practice implementation. Suggestions for school districts include allocation of the resources of time and money, revision of appropriate curricula, and the hiring of teacher support in the form of a literacy coach or other person who can help teachers in the process of changing their current classroom practices. Ideas for parents include thinking about the fact that home literacy views affect children’s school experiences and that parent-child interactions are important for literacy learning. Implications for me, as the researcher, include being more aware of how my words and actions can affect the environment under study, and to consider some variations of how this study can be completed differently in the future.
Teacher Preparation and Teacher Professional Development

**Importance of student-student interactions.** Teacher candidates and teachers alike need to have a full understanding of the importance of allowing children to talk to each other in order to promote the learning process (Wells & Wells, 1984). Research has shown that motivation and achievement are greater in classrooms where the students are encouraged to participate in whole-class and small-group discussions (Pressley et al., 2001). As explained through Vygotsky’s (1993) theory of social constructivism, children learn through interactions with others.

**Significance of the literacy environment.** A positive literacy environment is essential to children’s literacy learning. These positive literacy environments include a variety of important inanimate objects, important teacher behaviors and attitudes, and essential programs and routines (Cambourne, 2000). Some of these important physical materials include a large variety of books on various topics and on various reading levels, grouping desks to promote interactions among the children, having all kinds of print both teacher and student made adorning the classroom walls, and other resources that help to promote the literacy learning within the classroom setting.

The teacher’s behaviors also greatly affect this environment. A teacher’s attitude towards and promotion of reading are an important part of this environment and how the students will learn how to read. It is essential for a teacher to promote the idea that all students can and will learn how to read. Some examples of how these behaviors play out in the classroom setting include teacher read-alouds. Teachers need to read to their students on a regular basis. In this regard, it is important for teachers to choose the books that they want to share with their students carefully and consider how these books fit into the classroom theme and overall context. It is
also important that teachers teach their students various strategies for word identification and comprehension that are important for readers to know and be able to use. How a teacher guides his/her students in the reading process is an important aspect of the classroom literacy environment.

Classroom routines and procedures are also important aspects of a classroom literacy environment. Buddy reading, literature circles, and cooperative learning activities are good examples of classroom routines that can be used to help children grow and develop in a classroom literacy environment that encourages student-student interactions.

**Considering beliefs about reading and being a reading teacher.** A teacher’s conceptualization of her role as the teacher gives a window into how she feels about the teaching of reading. Both of Miss Beckham’s conceptualizations about her role as a reading teacher were easily identified in the classroom setting. She explained that she viewed herself as a guide, and she worked to guide Scully and Bean to find appropriate reading materials. The other conceptualization that Miss Beckham shared as her role was as a cheerleader who worked to excite her students about reading. Miss Beckham’s enthusiasm for the author studies and books that she shared with her students was evident through their attention during read-alouds and desire to read certain books. Teachers need to think carefully about how they view their roles because those views have a direct impact on what they do in their classroom and how their students will learn to read (Bullough, 1991). A teacher’s enthusiasm and positive attitude towards reading will influence student perceptions of reading, attitude towards reading and eventually engagement in reading. If a teacher does not think of reading in high regard then she/he is more likely to pass that view onto her/his students through the lack of focus on reading.
**Value of content area reading.** It is essential that classroom teachers in the primary grades expose their students to informational text and help them to understand this genre of literature, especially considering the dismal results of Nell Duke’s (2000) landmark study of informational text in first grade classrooms. During my eight weeks in this classroom, little reading was done as part of studies in the content areas or from informational text in general.

**Teacher Practice**

**Promote and explicitly teach students how to interact together.** One suggestion for practice is to promote student-student interactions and encourage students to interact with each other about what they are reading and learning on a regular basis. Students need the opportunity to talk and interact with each other in order to learn and process what they are learning (Wells & Wells, 1984). In relation to encouraging students to interact more, teachers need to model what those interactions should look like. Students do not automatically know and understand what focused, academic language sounds like (Maloch, 2002). Miss Beckham encouraged her students to interact revolving around some activities, but I observed no cooperative or collaborative activities occurring in this classroom.

Because of these reasons, classroom teachers need to explicitly teach students about what they want them to do. Maloch’s (2002) study explicated the need for teachers to help students understand the expectations. The classroom teacher in that study scaffolded her students’ participation in literature circles so that they could have more productive and focused conversations. The teacher (and researcher) recognized the fact that students do not automatically know how to interact with each other in a small group setting. In Pearson’s (2010) study, Pearson worked with a classroom teacher to introduce students to the concept of literature circles. The teacher and researcher prepared the students for their literacy circle experiences.
through five lessons that explicitly taught them about appropriate talk for the literature circle setting. The students practiced each of the Daniels’ (2004) roles in pairs and again in small groups before they actually participated in the literature circle experiences observed as a part of the study. Miss Beckham did not indicate in the classroom that she was unhappy or displeased with students’ interactions during buddy reading, but what I observed in the classroom did not match what she shared about the importance of those student-student interactions during her interview. Miss Beckham shared that she felt that students learned a great deal from each other “when they talk about what they’re reading, when they’ll ask each other questions” (interview notes, 4-21-11).

Buddy reading has a lot of potential in helping struggling readers gain skills, but students need instruction in how to do this effectively (Brown, 2006; Flint, 2010; Griffin, 2002). If the teacher would like them to talk about what they are reading, then she needs to help them understand how to do that. If she/he wants them to help each other figure out words and encourage each other rather than simply telling their partner a word and moving on then she/he needs to basically model this kind of behavior for the children. In the one-on-one formal semi-structured interviewed, Miss Beckham shared more ideas about how this interaction occurs, “I think there’s a difference between when a struggling reader is struggling with a word and they, the accelerated reader, just tells them what it is than just helps them or says “You got it” or “You try it” (interview notes, 4-21-11). I did not observe these kinds of interactions among the students during my observations. Occasionally, a partner would give the other child time to figure out a word, but this may have been due to a lack of attention on the listener’s part.

Sustain a positive literacy environment. The classroom teacher is an essential part of the classroom literacy environment (Cambourne, 2000). The teacher’s actions greatly affect how
students approach the task of reading and how they feel about the process in general. Miss Beckham helped her students choose appropriate books for their interest and ability levels. She also worked to excite them about reading through classroom read-alouds and author studies of numerous authors. Her expectation of reading after completing work was also important to these students’ attitudes toward reading and engagement in the act of reading. Classroom teachers need to make sure that they set up a positive environment for their students that encourages and promotes reading (Cambourne, 2000; Morrow, Tracey & Del Nero, 2011; Morrow, Tracey, Woo & Pressley, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston, 1998).

**Examine views of classroom practice implementation.** Teachers need to have a good understanding of classroom practices that are appropriate for students, such as being able to interact with others while learning and learning reading strategies that will help them become successful readers. Miss Beckham shared some excellent ideas about the importance of student-student interactions and the benefits that they can have for students. These views did not play out in the classroom setting. Miss Beckham’s students did not have a lot of opportunities to interact with each other and did not interact in the ways that Miss Beckham shared as being important in her interview, such as asking each other questions while reading and helping one’s partner figure out a word rather than just telling him/her the word. These kinds of interactions did not occur in Miss Beckham’s classroom while I was there. Reflection is an important, often forgotten, aspect of classroom teaching. Teachers need to be encouraged to take the time to reflect on their own teaching and make sure that their teaching aligns with their beliefs about what is important for their students’ education. A simple way for teachers to work on reflection would be to keep a reflective journal. The teacher could spend about 5 minutes at the end of each day recording thoughts and ideas of what happened during the day, what worked well and
what did not. What strategies were effective with a particular child and what strategies did not work for that child? The teacher should take time to review the journal periodically to check for patterns and see what has been happening in the classroom setting based on those quick reflections. Another way to complete this reflection is through video-taping oneself teaching and then watching the tape. This serves as an active and authentic form of personal professional development. In a study completed by Collins, Cook-Cottone, Robinson and Sullivan (2005), the researchers used video-taping as part of their class assignments in some of their college courses. The students in all three of the courses were required to upload their videos for whole class viewing and evaluating. When sharing feedback with the instructor researchers about the project, one student stated, “sometimes some of the best learning happens when you watch yourself” (p. 143). A final method to promote reflection is through peer-observation. In a self-study completed by Pressick-Kilborn and te Riele (2008), the researchers observed in each other’s classrooms, discussed the sessions with each other and worked together to analyze the data to figure out what they learned from the experience. A major theme from their self-analysis was the fact that they are models for their students, which emphasized the importance of sharing personal teaching reflections with the students. Pressick-Kilborn and te Riele felt that “active and reciprocal involvement in each other’s teaching can provide prompts for articulation of reasoning and ongoing reflection” (p. 73). Peer observation is a way for teachers to learn more about how their behaviors and actions are interpreted by an outside person.

**School Districts**

The dearth of productive student-student interactions revolving around literature revealed through this research study has a number of implications for school districts, including allocation
of resources, revision of curricula or classroom day, and to hire some support for the teachers in the form of a literacy coach.

This study showed the importance of allocating resources in the form of time and money for teachers to be able to fully integrate student-student interactions into their classrooms. Teachers need time and money to attend professional development workshops that help them fully understand how to integrate student-student interactional opportunities into their classroom setting. Teachers also need time to work on planning how to implement the ideas that they learn at the professional development workshops.

School districts also need to change the curricula and/or classroom day in such a way that teachers are able to integrate student-student interactions into their classroom. Teachers need a curriculum that is compatible with developing students’ abilities to interact productively with each other. The freedom to work with their classroom schedule in such a way that they can teach and encourage productive student-student interactions is also an important aspect of this classroom day/schedule change for classroom teachers.

The final thing that teachers need from the school district is support. In order to change a classroom practice, teachers need support and help from someone that can help them refine and continue to work on refining their classroom practice. Hiring a literacy coach that can help teachers incorporate more student-student interactions into their classroom literacy environment would be an important way for school districts to support changing the findings of this research study.

Parents

Home literacy views affect school experiences. The one-on-one semi-structured formal interviews with the focal students indicated how essential home literacy experiences can be for
young readers, especially those readers who are struggling with the initial stages of learning how to read. All five of these students reported enjoying reading and indicated reading and being read to at home on a regular basis. During the second interview, Bean indicated that she views her Mom as a good reader that she knows. She also shared with me that her Mom reads on a regular basis, which gave Bean a good role model for her own reading practices. Reading to and with children at home is an important activity for parents to participate in on a regular basis. These reading experiences help the child to not only learn about the importance of reading and how enjoyable reading can be, but also that reading is an important activity to undertake on a regular basis.

**Parent-child interactions important for literacy learning.** Not only is reading at home and being read to at home important for children’s school success, but interacting during the reading is also an important aspect of the reading experience for young children. Research indicates (Bake, Mackler, Sonnenscheir & Serpell, 2001; Buss, van Ilzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Vandermaas-Peeler, Nelson, Bumpass & Sassine, 2009) that the interactions that parents have with their children during the shared reading experience affects children’s later school success. These interactions also help to prepare children for classroom interactions and how to interact with the teacher and classmates around material they have read.

**Me, the Researcher**

**Affecting the research.** As a beginning researcher, I made a number of “mistakes” in the implementation of this dissertation study. A major one of those mistakes was the way that I inadvertently affected the flow of this second grade classroom. My very presence in this classroom affected how the teacher and students carried out their daily activities. The questions and some of the informal interviews that I conducted with the teacher, however, affected how the
teacher implemented activities and teaching in her classroom. After I asked about how she completed *Daily Oral Language*, she completed an activity with the students related to the daily oral language program. After I asked her how I could witness more student-student interactions, she created a new activity for the students to complete. It is important for the researcher to stay in their chosen role, such as participant observer without interfering with the daily life of the classroom setting.

**Variations on this research.** There are a number of ways that this research study can be changed and implemented in a different setting. One way would be to find a teacher who has more teaching experience as well as uses forms of student-student interactional techniques on a regular basis. This would allow me, as the researcher, to learn more about the effects that student-student interactions have on how children learn how to read as well as how it affects their attitude towards reading. Another variation on this research would be to study children of varying ability levels as focal students. This would allow a comparison across ability levels to see if students’ participation in student-student interactions is affected by their ability to read.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the findings from this study, there are specific areas that need further study to help researchers, educators and other practitioners understand them more fully. There is a need for more research in the areas of student-student interactions, effective literacy teachers and the literacy environment, teacher conceptualizations of their role in the classroom, and attitude towards and engagement in reading.

**Student-student interactions.** We need to continue to research and learn about student-student interactions at the primary level. It is clear that talking and interacting with each other helps students learn and process their learning (Flynn, 2010), but there is a limited amount of
research completed in this area. More research needs to be done on the kinds of student-student interactions that students have the opportunities to be a part of throughout the school day in classrooms where students interact with each other on a regular basis so that we can learn how teachers incorporate interaction into their teaching.

**Effective teachers and the literacy environment.** We need new research on how effective teachers teach reading. The studies completed by Morrow, Tracey, Woo, and Pressley (1999) Wharton-McDonald et al. (1997) and Wharton-McDonald, Pressley and Hampston (1998) were very enlightening in helping educators learn more about what effective classroom teachers were doing to promote literacy learning. These studies were published between twelve and fourteen years ago, though, so we need more recent information on what is happening in classrooms today. Policies, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (20, U.S.C. § 6319, 2008), have been implemented since the time of these studies. As a result of NCLB, many teachers are being required to use scripted reading programs, which limit what a teacher can do with their students in terms of what has been found by the research to be effective and what helps struggling readers learn and acquire more skills. The adoption of the Common Core Standards by 45 of the 50 states also points to a need for additional research on effective teachers and in turn the literacy environments that they create. We, as researchers and educators, need to investigate how these policies have or have not affected what teachers do in their classrooms.

**Teacher conceptualizations of their roles.** Another suggestion is to explore how teachers conceptualize their roles as reading instructors and how those conceptualizations transfer to classroom practice. Teachers view their roles as a classroom teacher differently as evidenced by the large varieties of classroom resources on the market today, such as Harvey Daniels’ (1994) *Literature circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom*, Gail
Boushey and Joan Moser’s (2006) *The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades*, and Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis’s (2007) *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension for understanding and engagement*. Many teachers, on the other hand, do not have a choice of the classroom materials that they are allowed to use and are required to use specific reading materials in a specific way. We do not know how those views based on choosing materials and being required to use certain materials transfer to classroom practice and how all of this affects student learning.

**Attitude and engagement.** Finally, there is a need to continue to gather data about reading attitude through qualitative methods, including interviews and observations in order to learn more about reading attitude from the perspective of the reader as well as how that attitude plays out in the classroom setting. This is particularly important for the struggling readers since their attitudes start out lower and continue to deteriorate throughout their school experiences. In the present study, some students stated that they enjoyed reading and found reading interesting, but did not engage in the act of reading on a regular basis. As mentioned in the review of literature, most of the research on attitude toward reading includes self-reported survey data (Lazarus & Callahan, 2000; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995) and does not address how attitude played out in the classroom setting and what factors may affect the decline of attitudes toward reading through students’ school years. There is also a need for more research on student engagement in reading at the primary level as well. Many educators are concerned about the lack of engagement in reading displayed by older children, but we need to also explore the engagement of young students in an effort to learn how we can work to stop the decline in engaged reading as children grow into adulthood.
Limitations of this Study

When considering this research study, a number of limitations come to mind. The biggest limitation of this study was the fact that the student-student interactions and classroom environment were not either audio or video taped for later analysis. This choice was made due to IRB limitations, but that choice resulted in a limit to the amount of data collected and analysis that could be done on it. I was not able to record all aspects of each interaction that occurred in the classroom setting through my field notes. Because I was not able to get a verbatim transcript of what the students said to each other, I was not able to analyze the data using other methodologies, such as discourse analysis.

Because this study occurred in one classroom with a focus on one teacher and five of her students, generalizations about classroom practice and other activities that occurred in this classroom could not be made. Even though overarching generalizations cannot be made, “human behavior is not random or idiosyncratic” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 36). There are students like Anthony, Bartee, Bean, Riley and Scully in other classrooms. Others, therefore, can learn from the findings related to these struggling readers’ experiences in their second grade classroom.

Another limitation of this study was the time of year that it occurred and the fact that I only observed for a total of eight weeks. Based on communication with Miss Beckham prior to the beginning of the study, I was not able to observe guided reading groups or weekly oral reading assessments because she had finished using the books provided with the reading series earlier in the school year. A longer period of time in the classroom may have given me more data on a larger variety of student interactions.
Some of the other limitations of this study involved missed opportunities in data collection. One is the fact that I should have obtained copies of more examples of the students’ work, especially the papers that I observed the students completing that sparked the interactions, including the graphic organizers about How to Eat Fried Worms and the one about the Piggie and Elephant books. One way to address this in future research would be to review field note transcripts for relevant information on a regular basis and then ask the teacher for copies of work samples based on those reviews. Another limitation is that I did not involve the focal students in enough of the informal interviews. By the time I realized that I had questions about what I was observing, the moment was gone or children were moving to the next center. One way to address this in future research is to be aware of classroom happenings and ask children questions regularly. The more that this informal interviewing is undertaken, the more comfortable that both researcher and participants will feel about what is going on.

Summary

This chapter discussed the conclusions drawn following the data analysis for this dissertation. Conclusions were explained based on each of the five research questions explored through this research. Although this classroom setting did not include a large amount of student-student interaction opportunities, the students did have the opportunity to grow and develop as readers in a supportive and nurturing literacy environment. The teacher’s view of her role as a reading instructor was plainly evident in her classroom while her view of classroom practices related to student-student interactions were not as clearly observed. The students’ views of teacher support and what good readers do helped the researcher understand more about their view of their teacher and of reading in general.
Implications for teacher preparation and professional development, teacher practice, school districts, parents, and me, as the researcher, were also shared and discussed. Suggestions for teacher preparation and professional development include helping pre-service and in-service teachers understand the importance of student-student interactions, the effect of the literacy environment on student learning, thinking about and considering their beliefs about reading and the teaching of reading, and the significance of content area reading in the primary classroom. Ideas for teacher practice include promoting and explicitly teaching students how to interact within the classroom context, creating a positive literacy environment that supports the development of all students, and examining how their views on what is good practices compares to what is actually happening in their classroom. In order to promote student-student interactions in the classroom setting, school districts need to allocate resources, revise curriculum, and provide adequate support to teachers as they work and change their classroom setting to include student-student interactions. Suggestions for parents include interacting with their child while reading a book together and promoting positive attitudes toward reading in the home environment.

I also made some suggestions for further research. These suggestions include exploring the kinds of interactions that students, especially in the primary grades are experiencing in the classroom setting. Another area of needed research concerns effective classroom teachers and the literacy environment created by them. A third suggestion is to not only explore teacher conceptualizations of their role as reading instructors, but also how the conceptualizations affect their classroom behaviors and practices. A final suggestion for further research is to continue the exploration of student attitude and engagement through interview and observation techniques. There is a dearth of recent qualitative data on these two areas of study.
Finally the limitations of this study were discussed. These limitations include the fact that the interactions were not either audio or video taped in some way, the small sample size of one teacher and five students in her classroom, which does not allow for generalizations from this research. Another limitation was when this research occurred in the classroom. It only occurred for a two-month period at the end of the school year when routines are often different and out of the ordinary. Finally, more student work samples and informal interview data should have been collected to make this research more descriptive and in-depth.

**Closing Thoughts**

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of student-student interactions within literacy events in a second grade classroom through the use of case study methodology. This study explored students’ attitudes towards reading, their engagement in literacy activities, and their peer interactions. I observed literacy activities throughout time devoted to the language arts instruction as well as content area instruction in science and social studies. This study also investigated how one second grade teacher viewed her role as a reading instructor and how she influenced the student interactions that occurred during structured literacy events throughout the school day. My hope is that this research will help to inspire others to explore the world of student interactions, the classroom literacy environment, and teacher beliefs.
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Publications.


Children’s Literature Discussed


Children’s Series Books Discussed

Barrows, A. *Ivy and Bean* series. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books LLC.


INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROTOCOL APPROVAL NOTIFICATION
FOR STUDIES GRANTED EXPEDITED APPROVAL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Margaret Lehman, M.S.

PROTOCOL: IRB #11-01-05-01E – The Relationship Among Student Interactions, Reading Attitude, and Engagement in Literacy Events Across the Curriculum

Includes informed consent Yes
Includes recruitment Yes
Informed consent requirement waived No
Survey materials constitute abbreviated consent No
Includes HIPAA Waiver No

Sponsor: Principal Investigator

DATE: March 9, 2011

The approval for this research activity expires on: March 9, 2012

1. The federal regulations at 45 CFR 46.110 which allow for the expedited review procedure, require that the IRB adopt a method for keeping all members advised of research proposals which have been approved under this procedure. The full Board will be notified of the expedited approval status of your study at its next convened meeting. You will be notified in writing in the event the Board disagrees with this expedited approval decision.

2. For adverse event reporting requirements, please refer to UC Policy II.02.

3. The period of approval of this research project is stated above. In order for a project to continue with IRB approval beyond the expiration date, a progress report form must be filed with the Institutional Review Board on at least an annual basis, and sometimes more frequently at the discretion of the Board.

4. There may be no change or addition to the project, or changes of the investigators involved, without prior approval of the IRB.

5. You are required to modify this study, subject to IRB approval, if subsequent information regarding any drug, device or procedure utilized in the study is received from the manufacturer or any other reliable source that could reasonably increase or alter potential harm to subjects. The informed consent statement must be modified to include this new information or an addendum must be prepared as a means to assure subject notification. In cases where the subject has completed the study, the modification or addendum is only necessary if the additional information received could impact the subjects in the future.

Chairperson (or Designee), Institutional Review Board

*The attached consent is stamped with the period of IRB approval. Please copy this ICS document and use for all subjects entered into the study.

Please note: This approval is through the U.C. IRB only. You may be responsible for reporting to other regulatory officials (e.g., VA Research and Development Office, UC Health- University Hospital). Please check with your Institution and Department to ensure you have met all reporting requirements.

Statement regarding International Conference on Harmonisation and Good Clinical Practices
The University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board is duly constituted (fulfilling FDA requirements for diversity), has written procedures for initial and continuing review of research studies: prepares written minutes of convened meetings, and retains records pertaining to the review and approval process; all in compliance with requirements defined in 21 CFR Parts 56, 58 and 312 Code of Federal Regulations. This institution is in compliance with the ICH GCP as they correspond to FDA/DHHS regulations.

University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board Office
51 Goodman Dr, Suite 300, ML #567, Cincinnati, Ohio 45267-0667
Telephone 513-558-4298, Fax 513-558-4111

http://www.researchcompliance.uc.edu/irb/

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Appendix B

Recruitment Speech Script

Good morning (afternoon) second graders! How are you today? My name is Maggie Lehman and I am a student at the University of Cincinnati. As part of my classes, I need to do a learning project. I would like to learn more about how second graders feel about reading. What will happen is that I watch things going on in your classroom throughout the school day. Another activity will be that I will ask you to come and talk to me by yourself and the two of us will talk about reading and how you feel about reading. You don’t have to be part of my learning project. Nobody will be mad at you if you decide not to do, and your grades won’t be affected at all. If you would like to help me, then I need you to write your name on this paper and circle the word “yes.” If you don’t’ want to help me, then I need you to write your name on this paper and circle the word “no.”

Pause while passing out the papers.

(Now I will read the assent paper with the students while they follow along to make sure that all students understand what it says and what they are going to be asked to do.)

Your parents also need to say whether or not they want you to be in my learning project. Please take the permissions forms home to your parents for them to read. If they sign the form, please bring it back and give it to Miss Beckham so I can figure out how many students will take part in my project. Thank you.
Dear Parents,

My name is Margaret (Maggie) Lehman, and I am a Doctor of Education student in Literacy at the University of Cincinnati. My areas of interest include how students interact with each other and their teacher, student attitudes towards reading, and student engagement in the reading process. I taught in Catholic schools in Dayton, Ohio for nine years before I made the decision to become a full-time student. My dedication to Catholic education is what brings me to Light the Way School. My friend and cohort member, Mrs. Beth Corbo, enabled me to connect with Miss Beckham, who has graciously agreed to work with me through this dissertation process.

I will be working on a study with the second graders in Miss Beckham’s second grade class. This study would entail me observing the children during their literacy related subjects, including reading, phonics, spelling, LA/English, and even science and social studies. During these observations, I would be paying close attention to how students interact with each other and Miss Beckham, their engagement in the reading process and literacy activities, and finding out more about their attitude and feelings towards reading and engagement in the reading process. One-on-one interviews will also be a part of this research study. I will interview students in regards to what I notice while observing in the classroom about their attitude towards reading, and their engagement in the reading process. The reason for this letter is that I need your permission in allowing me to work with your child.

I will be observing in Miss Beckham’s classroom regardless of your child’s participation in the research study. However, if you do not give permission for your child to participate in this research study, your child will not be included in my observation notes, interviews or collection of work samples. Your child’s grades will not be affected by this research in any way.

I have spoken to the students during class today, and they have had the opportunity to ask questions and give their assent to participate. Regardless of their assent, they need your permission to participate. Attached is a parent permission form that explains this research study in greater detail. Please read through the permission form and contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this research study. By giving me permission, you’ll enable me to get a better glimpse of how reading happens in a second grade classroom.

Thank you for considering allowing your child to be a part of my dissertation research.

Margaret A. Lehman

Margaret A. Lehman
Appendix D

Parent Permission for Child to Participate in a Research Study
University of Cincinnati
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
Division of Teacher Education
Principal Investigator: Margaret A. Lehman 937-478-4652
lehmanme@mail.uc.edu
Mentor and Advisor: Susan Watts-Taffe, Ph.D. 513-556-2534
susan.watts-taffe@uc.edu
Mr. Robert Herring, Principal; Miss Beckham, 2nd Grade Teacher, Lighting the Way School
513-458-6767

Title of Study: The Relationship among Reading Attitude, Social Interactions, and Engagement in Literacy Activities across the Curriculum

Introduction:
You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study. Please read this paper carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Who is doing this research study?
The person in charge of this research study is Margaret Lehman of the University of Cincinnati (UC) Division of Teacher Education. I am a Doctor of Education student in the Literacy Department.

What is the purpose of this research study?
The purpose of this research study is to look at how students feel about themselves as readers. I will also be looking at how students’ beliefs show in their actions and talk during all of their classes.

Who will be in this research study?
All the second grade students in Miss Beckham’s class are invited to take part in this research study.

What will your child be asked to do in this research study, and how long will it take?
The research study has been described to your child’s class today. If you give permission, your child will be included in classroom observations. Giving permission will mean that copies of their class assignments may be used for the research study. Real names will be blacked out and made up names put on all copies of assignments that are collected. Your child will be asked to participate in an interview. These interviews will be audio recorded. They will be asked questions about how they feel about reading and themselves as readers. These interviews will be in a one-on-one format. The one-on-one interviews will last about 10-15 minutes, and your child will not miss any regular classroom activities. After the tapes are transcribed (written out), I will erase the tapes.

Your child’s participation in this research study will last for 10-12 weeks during the 2010-2011 school year.
Are there any risks to being in this research study?
It is not expected that there will be any risk or discomfort from participating in this study. The use of made up names will ensure confidentiality and none of the data collected will include sensitive personal information. Again, participation or non-participation in this study will not affect your child’s grades in any way.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?
There are no direct benefits for your child’s participation in this study. Findings may be used to develop recommendations for future classrooms in helping develop students’ attitudes and increase classroom involvement, though.

Will your child have to pay anything to be in this research study?
Your child will not receive any payment for their participation in this research study.

Does your child have choices about taking part in this research study?
Your child does not have to participate if they do not want to. Not participating in the study will not affect students, their grades, or their learning. It will simply mean that your child will not be observed during the classroom observation. Work samples will not be collected from them. They will not be asked for an interview. If you do not want your child to be tape recorded, you should not give permission for them to be in this research study.

How will your child’s research information be kept confidential?
Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.
- Only the researcher, will observe your child’s class, conduct the interviews, and transcribe the interviews.
- Audio recorded conversations and interviews will be transcribed then erased at the end of the study. Made up names will be used in place of all real names.
- Made up names will be put on student work samples and classroom artifacts collected.
- Observation notes will not include students’ real names.
- The data from this study may be published and/or presented at conferences. Students will not be identified.
- All research data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office. Access to this information is limited to the researcher and faculty advisor.

Agents of the University of Cincinnati may inspect study records for audit or quality assurance purposes.

What are your and your child’s legal rights in this research study?
Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights your child may have. This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

What if you or your child has questions about this research study?
If you or your child has any questions about the study, you may call me at 937-478-4652 or e-mail at lehmanme@mail.uc.edu. Dr. Susan Watts-Taffe, my faculty advisor, can be reached at 513.556.2534 or at susan.watts-taffe@uc.edu. Mr. Herring, principal and Miss Beckham can be reached at (513) 458-6767.

The UC Institutional Review Board – Social and Behavioral Sciences (IRB-S) reviews all non-medical research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.
If you have questions about your child's rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the Chairperson of the UC IRB-S at (513) 558-5784. Or, you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB-S, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.

Does your child HAVE to take part in this research study?
No one has to be in this research study. Refusing to take part will NOT cause any penalty or loss of benefits that you or your child would otherwise have. You may give your permission and then change your mind and take your child out of this study at any time. To take your child out of the study, you should contact me at 937-478-4652 or lehmanme@mail.uc.edu.

Your child will be asked if he or she wants to take part in this research study. Even if you say yes, your child may still say no.

Agreement:
I have read this information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I give my permission for my child to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of this signed and dated Parent Permission form to keep.

You Child's Name (please print) ____________________________________________

Your Child's Date of Birth _______________ (Month / Day / Year)

_____ I agree to allow my child to participate. _____ I do not want my child to participate.

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature __________________________________ Date _______
Student Assent to participate in a Research Study
University of Cincinnati
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
Division of Teacher Education
Principal Investigator: Margaret A. Lehman 937-478-4652
lehmanme@mail.uc.edu
Mentor and Advisor: Susan Watts-Taffe, Ph.D. 513-556-2534
Mr. Robert Herring, Principal; Miss Beckham, 2nd Grade Teacher, Lighting the Way School
513-458-6767

Title of the Research Study: The Relationship among Reading Attitude, Social Interactions, and Engagement in Literacy Activities across the Curriculum

Would you like to join in a learning project? I would like to know how you feel about reading and how your feelings affect your learning.

Whether you say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ I will be in your classroom. If you say ‘yes,’ I may ask to meet with you to talk about your feelings about reading. These meetings will be taped. If you do not want what you say to be taped, you should circle ‘no’ at the bottom of this page. What you say will not be shared with Miss Beckham and will not affect your grades in any way. I may make copies of some of your school work. If I do, I will not use your real name, but will give you a made up name.

You can stop working with me at any time. If you want to stop, you can tell me, tell your teacher, write a note, or have your parent write a note. No questions will be asked if you choose to stop.

If you say ‘no,’ it will just mean that you will not be included in my learning project. I will not make copies of your school work or ask you for meetings. Your grades will not be affected if you do not want to join.

Please talk to me or Miss Beckham if you have any questions or concerns.

Please print your name and circle “yes” or “no”.

YES I want to be in this project.  
NO I do not want to be in this project.

Name: (print) __________________________________________________________

Signature of researcher confirming permission/assent ___________________  Date ________________
Parent Name: ___________________________________________________________  Permission received? ____________
Title of Study: The Relationship among Reading Attitude, Social Interactions, and Engagement in Literacy Activities across the Curriculum

Introduction:
You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study. Please read this paper carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Who is doing this research study?
The person in charge of this research study is Margaret Lehman of the University of Cincinnati (UC) Division of Teacher Education. I am a Doctor of Education student in the Literacy Department.

What is the purpose of this research study?
The purpose of this research study is to explore the relationship between students’ attitudes towards reading, their engagement in academic and non-academic literacy activities, and their social interactions throughout the school day, including all academic subjects, as well as recess, lunch and special classes (music, art and gym). Teacher input via semi-structured interviews will give further insight into student reading engagement and perception.

Who will be in this research study?
You will be the only teacher participant, and up to 30 students in your class may participate in this research study.

What will you be asked to do in this research study, and how long will it take?
You are being asked to participate in one-on-one formal and informal interviews. The formal interview will last approximately one hour and informal interviews will be impromptu discussions and interactions with the researcher. The informal discussions will be noted as field notes. The formal interview will be audio taped then transcribed. Once completed, the tapes will be erased. All transcriptions will use a pseudonym. All names as well as school and district information will be concealed through the use of pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality.
Your participation in this research study will last for 10-12 weeks during the 2010-2011 school year.

**Are there any risks to being in this research study?**
It is expected that you will not experience any risk or discomfort from participating in this research study.

**Are there any benefits from being in this research study?**
Although there are no direct benefits to you, findings may be used to develop recommendations for future classrooms: help raise students’ reading engagement, work toward the positive development in attitude towards reading, and learn more about the effects of student-to-student interactions.

**Will you have to pay anything to be in this research study?**
You will not receive any payment for participation in this research study.

**Do you have choices about taking part in this research study?**
If you do not want to take part in this research study you may simply not participate. If you do not want your interview to be tape recorded, you should decline to participate in this research study.

**How will your research information be kept confidential?**
Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. The principal investigator will observe the classroom, conduct the interviews, and transcribe the data.
- Audio recorded interviews will be transcribed then erased at the completion of the study.
- Observation notes will be transcribed with pseudonyms.
- The data from this study may be published and/or presented at conferences, but you, your students and your school will not be identified.
- All research data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the research office located in Edwards I, Room 2144. Only my faculty advisor and I will have access to the data.

Agents of the University of Cincinnati may inspect study records for audit or quality assurance purposes.

**What are your legal rights in this research study?**
Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights you may have. This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

**What if you have questions about this research study?**
If you have any questions about the study, you may call me at 937-478-4652 or e-mail at lehmanme@mail.uc.edu. Dr. Susan Watts-Taffe, my faculty advisor, can be reached at 513-556-2534 or at susan.watts-taffe@uc.edu.

The UC Institutional Review Board – Social and Behavioral Sciences (IRB-S) reviews all non-medical research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the Chairperson of the UC IRB-S at (513) 558-5784. Or, you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB-S, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.
**Do you HAVE to take part in this research study?**
No one has to be in this research study. Refusing to take part will NOT cause any penalty or loss of benefits that you would otherwise have. You may start and then change your mind and stop at any time. To stop being in the study, you should tell

**Agreement:**
I have read this information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

Participant Name (please print) ____________________________________________

Participant Signature ____________________________ Date __________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent ____________________________ Date ______
Appendix G

Semi-Structured Student Interview Protocol

Introduction: Briefly talk with the child to make him/her more comfortable. Explain to him/her that I’m interested in learning more about how second graders learn how to read and how they feel about reading.

- How do you feel about reading? Do you think that you are a good reader? Why?
- When do you find reading to be the most interest?
- Is reading important to you? How? When do you read? (In school? Out of school?)
- What does your teacher do to help you become a better reader?
- As a part of reading, how often are you allowed to talk to your classmates?
- Do you think that talking to others helps you to become a better reader? If yes, can you think of a time when talking to someone helped you become a better reader?

********************************************************************************

- How did you learn to read?
- What would you like to do better as a reader
Appendix H

Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Protocol

- What does reading mean to you? How would you define it? How would you describe the reading process?
- Can you share a metaphor that you would use to explain what reading is to you?
- Describe your philosophy or beliefs about the best ways to teach reading?
- What do you actually do to teach reading? Describe the content of your curriculum, the materials you use, the kinds of assignments students complete, and the types of instructional methods you use.
- How do you determine a student’s level of reading achievement?
- How do you help the readers in your classroom who are struggling with learning how to read? Do you make any adaptations, modifications or accommodations for them?
- How do you engage and motivate the students in your classroom?
- In your opinion, what makes a student a strong reader?
- In your opinion, what knowledge about reading do children need to acquire?
- In your opinion, what skills about reading do children need to acquire?
- In your opinion, what attitudes about reading do children need to acquire?
- As a reading teacher, what do you see as your role? Does this role change throughout the day? Is it different for different subjects or the same?
- What role do you think you play in your students learning to read?
- What role do you think the interactions students have with each other plays in their learning to read?
Appendix I

Example of Field Notes

Thursday, May 19, 2011
The students were working on writing a birthday letter for Sophia whose birthday is today when I arrived at around 8:45 today. Anthony was already finished and starting to color when I arrived. Riley was finished and coloring, as well. (She finished a bit earlier than Anthony, though.) Scully was writing, but seemed to be towards the bottom of the paper. Bean was writing and coloring, as well. Bartee was struggling again. Miss B reminded him to complete the graph on his Daily Math paper. Miss B tried to encourage him by telling him that she thought he could finish it in five minutes and then she left him to get to work and try. Sometimes she also stood near him to help, as well. He seemed to be writing and working. At 8:54, she said, “Good job, Bartee.” You’re almost done. She also put a couple more minutes on the timer so that he would have a little more time since he was working so hard. At 8:56, the students met on the carpet.

Oh, Bean had finished her letter and was reading her book…probably the one that she had left at home yesterday. She was so engrossed that she didn’t move when it was time to meet on the carpet. Miss B even had to correct her at one point in time. This is a huge change and improvement for Bean.

1 – Mrs. D – read BFG and one of Miss B’s favorite books if there’s time
2 – Miss B – wordle
3 – buddy read Moses 2 times and do the sign language
4 – AR/free read/letters

Scully and Bartee went with Mrs. D first. Bean and Anthony met on the carpet about the “wordle” project first. Riley worked on finishing coloring her birthday letter first. At 9:06, she finished her letter and got on AR to take a quiz. At 9:15, Riley was finished with her quiz and went back towards her desk, but she was distracted by watching a couple of boys who were buddy reading the story. She sat at her desk and watched them read. She had a mini book in her hand. I think that it was full of paper, though. Finally, Riley just pulled her chair over and listened to the boys…even though that wasn’t her center yet. After the boys had finished reading, Riley took out a picture book and was reading it.

I decided to watch Bean and Anthony work on their wordles first. Bean was lying on her belly next to Sophia. Anthony was sitting by himself at the far left as Miss B talked to the students and they made lists of words on the board in the columns for the different subject areas.

At 9:24, Miss B had Riley’s group line up at the door to go read with Mrs. D. Bean and Anthony went to the buddy reading center. Brynn and Anthony were reading together and Bean and Sophia were reading together. Since they were sitting near each other, I moved closer to hear and listen to what was going on. Brynn helped Anthony find the page in the book. The two pairs did a good job of doing the signs as they went along – as instructed to do by Miss B.
Anthony did a really good job reading his portion of the story. He still ran his finger under the words as he read. **I wonder if he does that because he’s reading aloud and that helps him keep his place in the book.** Bean did a pretty good job of reading her part. I had a harder time hearing her reading, though. While Brynn read, Anthony ran his finger under the words, as well. Bean and Sophia were sharing a book. Bean held it on her lap the whole time, but they did a good job of sharing it. Sometimes they also held it between their two laps....when Sophia was reading, but it was totally on Bean’s lap when she read. Bean’s reading is still without much expression or proper phrasing, but she didn’t have to pause as much as she read the words themselves.

Brynn and Anthony finished reading the last page when it was time to switch centers. I don’t think that

Jack went to find Scully to buddy read with him. Bartee had trouble finding a buddy read with. He asked Scully to read with him, but Scully said that he was Jack’s buddy. That really disappointed Bartee. Then Miss B suggested that the three of them read together. They found a group of desks to sit in and read together. I moved closer to them so that I could listen to the three of them read.

Bean read her book at her seat while Anthony decorated his birthday letter At 9:59, Anthony went to the bathroom and Bean was continuing to read her book at her desk.

Jack went to each boy and helped him find the correct page in the book. Jack was the first one to read. Bartee read next. He played with the cover that had been on his book while he read. Scully read next. Only the one that had read did any signs. The other two just watch him. Because of his playing around, Bartee didn’t know when it was his turn to read. He returned to messing with the cover after his turn. Scully ran his finger underneath the words as he read. Jack had to help him with a word as he read. Bartee was on the correct page, but he wasn’t looking at the words as Jack read like Scully had been doing. Bartee did read the next page when he was supposed to this time, though. Bartee stopped them to make sure that he had read because he was confused. While reading, Bartee held the other pages in the book and moved them back and forth while he stood at the desk. Scully did a good job reading the next page because it was a description of what the children in the class were doing on the percussion instruments. The phrasing was much easier to do since he was just description. At 10:00, the three boys started reading the story again. Bartee read his first page in the second reading in a singing voice rather than a regular reading voice. The boys didn’t say anything to him about it. Scully did a good job of reading his part. Bartee was singing his part again when Miss B said his name as a way to tell him to stop. It was pretty close to time to stop anyways.

At 10:04, Miss B had Bean and Anthony’s group line up at the door. Bean was so engrossed in her book that Miss B had to call her name again to line up at the door. **This is very different than what she had done in the past. I am so happy that she found a series of books that she enjoys reading.**

At 10:06, Mrs. C came in to get Scully and Bartee.
Riley started buddy reading with Ella. They both did the signs this time. Riley did fairly well as she read her parts. She only had to stop and decode one word, but her reading was a bit halting and slow. During her next turn, Riley read a word wrong, but Ella didn’t catch it because she turned the page so slowly. Riley had trouble with the names of the woman in the story so she skipped them and Ella didn’t correct her. During the next time that she struggled, Ella whispered the words to her. After reading the story, Ella suggested that they just do the sign language in the story. They read the story regularly and did the signs as before, though. Riley’s reading was much better the second time around. She got stuck on the word “musician” and Ella didn’t seem to help her so she skipped it and moved on.

At 10:23, the last group returned from reading with Mrs. D, but the girls kept reading. Even as the classroom got noisier, they continued to try and finish.

You have 5 minutes until recess: finish work, free read, finish your birthday letter. “I like how Will and Bean have chosen to read.” At 10:27, Bean came over to tell Miss B that she only had 7 pages left in the book that she was reading. At 10:28, the girls stopped reading and returned to their individual desks. Riley got out the picture book and continued reading. She ran her finger under the words as she read. Anthony, on the other hand, didn’t do that when he was reading on his own, though.

Bean was so engrossed in her book that she took it out to recess with her…and was reading while walking. She really wanted to read that book!!

At 11:00, the children returned from recess and started playing a game of sparkle. Anthony went down on a ‘sparkle.’ Bartee did well spelling this set of words. Bean went down on a ‘sparkle.’ I’m unsure about why Scully went down. Bartee went down on a misspelled word. Riley was the second to last one in, but she went down on a ‘sparkle,’ as well.

Scully went to on the second sparkle of game 2. Bartee went down on a ‘sparkle’ this time. Anthony wasn’t paying attention so he went down for guessing the wrong word to say. Bean went down on a ‘sparkle.’ Riley was the last one up…related to the fact that Miss B threw one of their vocabulary words into the mix instead of one of the spelling words.

**Key:**

Information in red is what I added after I reviewed my notes later that week.
Information that is bold is researcher’s note or something that I was thinking about while taking the notes.
Appendix J

Example of a Student Interview Transcript

Interview with Anthony on 4-27-11

M: All right, Anthony. How do you feel about reading?
A: I feel that it's fun.
M: Okay. Why is it fun?
A: 'cause it can be funny sometimes.
M: So, some of the books you read are funny and it makes it fun.
A: Yeah.
M: Okay. Do you think that you're a good reader?
A: Yeah.
M: Why?
A: Because I usually read a lot.
M: When do you like to read?
A: Well, if I get my work done and it's silent in the house I read because if my brother's not home it's usually silent.
M: Oh, how old is your brother?
A: three and a half
M: Okay. When do you find reading to be the most interesting?
A: When it's about animals.
M: You like animals a lot.
A: Yeah.
M: Ah, I can tell that. Umm, is reading important to you?
A: Yeah.

M: How?

A: Well, sometimes it gives information about, sometimes people don't know what can happen if animals don't exist anymore so that can be dangerous so they try to keep those animals alive.

M: Okay, so reading is important because it teaches us things.

A: Yeah.

M: Okay. And umm, when you're at home, you said you like to read when it's quiet. Are there other times that you read at home?

A: Yeah, sometimes I make my parents read to me a story about animals before I go to bed so that I can learn more about animals.

M: Okay, so when you're at home when it's quiet do you like to read by yourself?

A: Yeah.

M: And then at other times you ask your parents to read to you?

A: Yeah because I always ask them to read animal books to me because animals are pretty interesting to me.

M: okay. What does Miss B do to help you become a better reader?

A: Well, she reads to us and she also helps, umm, she reads to us which when we get to that word we can also sound it out.

M: Okay. So, she reads to you and she helps you sound out words when you come to words you don't know.

A: Yeah.

M: Okay. Okay. Umm, so how do you think Miss B reading to you helps you become a better reader?

A: Because if there's a word and it's spelled like it says then you know it's the same word.

M: Okay. Okay. Umm, as a part of reading, how often are you allowed to talk to your classmates?
A: ???? not at all.

M: Not at all? Are you sure? What about last week?

A: Well, we just do book talks sometimes and the rest of the time we're not allowed to talk or we just do book talks sometimes.

M: Okay. Now, do you, last week you read a book with Sam, right?

A: Right.

M: Right. Were you allowed to talk to Sam as you read it?

A: Uh, huh.

M: So, sometimes when you read a book together you're allowed to talk, right?

A: Yeah. But if we're reading by ourselves at our seats, which we normally do, we're not allowed to talk. We just have to read in our heads.

M: Oh, okay. Now, do...

A: Well, sometimes people talk quiet, but I just read in my head.

M: Oh, okay. Do you think that talking to others can help kids become better readers?

A: Yes.

M: Why?

A: Because if you study books more often then you'll become a better reader.

M: Okay. Do you think that talking to others helps you become a better reader?

A: Well, sometimes it does if it's good information.

M: Okay, so if you read something and it has good information and you're able to talk to somebody about that, that helps you?

A: Yeah.

M: Okay, umm, can you think of a time when talking to someone helped you?

A: Well, no, I can't.
M: Okay. Umm, now here's a tough one. Are you ready? How did you learn to read?

A: Well, well, my parents kept teaching me, kept saying words and trying to teach me how to read and so did my first grade teacher, Mrs. S so those kind of inspired me and so did Miss B so I'm getting a lot better at reading.

M: Okay. Umm, so they helped you learn new words. That's how you learned how to read.

A: Yeah.

M: Okay. What would you like to do better as a reader?

A: Hmmm, I don't know.

M: What do you think...if you could do this you'd be a better reader. Can you think of anything?

A: No.

M: No? Okay. All right. Just a second here. I kinda lost my page. All right, now, I noticed when I've been sitting in the classroom, when you get done with your "Daily Math" or something you're working on you get your book out right away. Some of the other kids will start talking to people, but you get your book out right away. Can you tell me about that?

A: Well, I just do it so I can become a better reader quicker and so I can read more often.

M: Ahhh, so you do it because you like to read. What's your favorite kind of book to read right now?

A: Well, right now it's Geronimo Stilton because it's so funny.

M: Okay. All right. Is there anything else you want to tell me.

A: Well, in Geronimo Stilton books, he's traveling in a lot of places and sometime it's really dangerous so he says funny words, like, ????

M: So, he's traveling to places and it gets dangerous so he says funny things...

A: Sometimes it's airplane rides which it's usually airplane rides.

M: Okay. All right.
Appendix K

Teacher Interview Transcripts

Interview with Miss Beckham 4-21-11

M: So, first, related to the struggling readers...

B: Yeah.

M: Umm, how is it decided that they're the ones that go to Title I?

B: Umm, what they do is at the beginning of the year Mrs. C does like a, she tests all of them and the ones that kinda qualify automatically because their fluency is so low and she picks them up and there's some bubble ones and then she'll decided depending on groups if she'll take them or not. Then as the year goes, if I see that they're struggling with comprehension, I'll ask her to pick them up. Like their fluency might be okay, but they might not be comprehending what they're saying or what they're reading so then I'll ask her pick them up. So for me she has a fluency group, like phonics and fluency group and then she has a comprehension group. So, umm, she just decides from there. And then they can kinda like graduate out of it, like I've had a couple graduate out of Mrs. C's group. So...

M: You mean this year?

B: Yeah, yeah, umm, Charlie in my class. He started with her. He was really struggling, like no interest in reading, didn't care. Now he drives me nuts because he won't put a book down when I'm trying to tell him something so, yeah, he doesn't go to her anymore so...

M: Okay. All right. The rest of these are some of you opinion just to get a feel for your philosophy, really.

B: All right.

M: Umm, first, what does reading mean to you? How would you define it?

B: Reading at this age I think is like learning to read. They're learning to understand the sounds and, umm, it's kind of a discovery for them at this age. They start not very unsure, they're not very sure of themselves and then they kind of move into being confident and getting excited about and interested in it and then later it turns into like actually reading to learn, so..

M: Uh, huh, umm, can you share a metaphor that you would use to explain what reading is to you?

B: What it is to me? I don't know about a metaphor, but, to me I read a lot to stay informed, like I like to read, ya know like news magazines and I like to read not pop culture books, but like
books that are New York Times Bestsellers. Ya know what's, so that's why it's important to me. It's always been important in my family. Ya know my parents are insane readers so to me it's just, it's something that comes with Knowledge. It's something that you do to gain knowledge and understanding of others and yourself. So I don't know about a metaphor, but that's what it means to me. It, I have a high value for reading.

M: And that was instilled from when you were a kid?

B: yeah. I mean, I vividly remember every single night before we went to bed. We would get in bed with my mom and she would read to us for like 45 minutes, every night so that was just something that was part of my family growing up, so..

M: Uh huh, umm, can you describe your philosophy, your beliefs about the best ways to teach reading?

B: I think, I feel like I'm most effective when I'm really excited about what we're reading, like if it's an author that I really like, I think I'm a much better teacher because they sense enthusiasm and excitement for it and so if I'm very excited about it and enthusiastic about it and have projects for them to do, then I think they get a lot out of it. Umm, and I think that, umm, I like to do a variety of activities with them, like, especially at the beginning of the year I read in a small group with them because I like to hear how they're reading and I like them to have the confidence or build their confidence to read in front of others. It's easier for them when it's such a small group, then I also like to have them read independently or read with a buddy without a teacher, umm, and then do activities with their reading so, so they see an importance in what they're reading and learning from what they're reading.

M: Umm, how do you determine a student's level of reading achievement?

B: Well, I look at their fluency, I look at their ability to choose book a book on their own. I think some kids really struggle with that and I think some kids have a real easy way of figuring out what book's right for them so I kinda let them find their way with that and then I look at their fluency and then I compare it to their in-class, like paper-reading test comprehension ability to their, umm, AR comprehension ability and combine that with their, umm, ya know, their partici, like just observational things like their participation in stories and those kinds of things.

M: Umm, how do you help the readers in your classroom who are struggling with learning how to read? Do you make adaptations, modifications, accomodations?

B: Umm, I usually talk to Mrs. C about some ideas to do for them. Here I feel like it's different than a lot of other schools. The struggling readers are still like, ya know, on the national level fine. Ya know, so I don't think that I have a lot of students that need really big accomodations as far as reading goes. I have done that before for students where I've made a reading guide that has a highlighted box and they slide it with the words or they'll use like a ruler and slide it down the page or ya know things like that, umm, or ya know highlight certain words in a text that they need to pay attention to. I've done things like that before, not with this group, though. Umm, in
this group, I think they learn very well from each other, the ones that are struggling tend to partner well with the ones that are doing well and they kind of pull their abilities up to that level so I like to do that a lot to help those struggling readers, so...

M: Okay. Umm, how do...(I turned off the recorder because we had some disruptions - then we continued the interview after that.) M: You've kind of touched on this a little bit.

B: Hmm, mmm.

M: umm, but how do you engage and motivate the students to...

B: Like I said, if I'm pretty enthusiastic about it, they're pretty enthusiastic about it. I try and like when I'm ch..say we do an author study, when I'm choosing the books to read to them, I try and choose the ones that have a message that's pertinent to them. Like the one we read yesterday was about a town that had no books, like the kids never learned how to read and that was something that was crazy to them 'cause it's all they do in school is learn how to read. So I try and pick books that are pertinent to them and, umm, then you know choosing activities that are kinesthetic or engage them in what they're doing, I think they do better with or when they're able to work with somebody else. They do some, they do a lot of independent things, too, but, umm, I think they're more engaged when it's something interactive I guess would be the best word.

M: Hmm, mmm, and how do you think, umm, with your reading centers...

B: Hmm, mm.

M: how do you try to work those into, uh, how do you decide on the activities that are part of...

B: Umm, I guess, well, I use the reading series like teacher, I always check through their centers to see if there's any that I like and that I think that the kids would enjoy because they're obviously, obviously already connected to the story, but then I like to do a word work center where they're getting a chance, getting very familiar with their spelling words for the week and doing different activities with those. I think that has helped. That's something I've done recently and I think it's helped a lot with their spelling words, umm, and then part of our second grade curriculum, they read chapter books. So, that's what they're been doing with the parent. Earlier in the year with the parent, they would do a related activity. Maybe read a related story and do an activity, umm, now they've been doing the chapter books. My cen, if I do a center, I like to read with them or do an activity with them where I know they're doing to need, have a lot of questions and need a lot of help with. Umm, I like them to have a free read center. I think it's important for them to have that chunk of time everyday where they know they're going to be able to read their book and take AR quizzes. I, ya know it's a combination of things whether we're teaching nouns, verbs or adjectives or whether ya know that's connected to the story or umm, or whether ya know we're doing an author and we're doing some projects with that author. It just depends on what all I can include in the week that has some sort of flow, I guess and that they're gonna, ya know of course looking at the standards and touching on, making sure that I touch on
those throughout the week, too, is, ya know I guess that's what I use to kind of put all of that together.

M: Okay, Okay, umm, in your opinion, what makes a student a strong reader?

B: If I think of the reader in my room who I think is the strongest reader, maybe not the most fluent, maybe not the, ya know, umm, if I think of him I know he reads at home every night and he is familiar with more books than probably I am because his parents share those books with him and he reads with them and he has an older sister who he reads with and he is just so familiar with so many different books. I mean for me to say "Moby Dick" yesterday and he knew that it was about a whale at the age of 8. I mean that's pretty crazy to think and he is like that with every book. And I think it comes a lot from home and his mom being, ya know putting a huge imporance on reading, that was his mom today, putting a huge importance on reading but then I think when they come to school and they see that as well. I think that putting those two things together, they're seeing it at home and at school, makes a very strong reader. Umm, ya know I think familiarity with different books and a realization that there are always books that they're gonna to like to read, ya know, makes them a strong reader because, umm, I think when kids feel like there's nothing to read that they're interested in, they just kind of shut down and don't really do it, but that's why I like the author studies because they get to read soo many books and I think for this week on their book talk I don't think a single kid didn't like their book so it's pretty cool and ya know they rea, they've read so many books and they love all of them, ya know.

M: Yeah, yeah, umm, in your opinion, what knowledge about reading do children need to acquire?

B: Knowledge about reading? What do mean? Elaborate.

M: Umm, like what do they need to be able to do in order to become the strong reader?

B: I think that they need to have confidence, ya know in my experience I've noticed that if a child lacks any confidence (B points to Bean's desk as she's talking here), they struggle. Ya know if they second guess themselves, they really struggle and they're not willing to try. I think they have to have confidence. I think they have to have those basic phonics skills that they can feel confident in decoding any unknown word. Umm, and I think they have to be able to use the texts and the pictures to help them figure out ya know and unknown, what a word means or something. I think those skills combined make them a very strong reader. Umm, it's just a matter of instilling those skills in them.

M: Exactly, umm, what attitudes about reading...we kinda just covered that.

B: Yeah, we did.

M: We like wiped out three questions at once. When I created this that's how it happened, umm, as a reading teacher, what do you see as your role?
B: I kind of, I don't know, I don't like to be the, like dictator in a classroom, I guess I kind of more like to take the guide role and, umm, ya know encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and their own reading, and I don't like to say to them, "You need to take an AR quiz everyday, you need to do this every day. I like them to, ya know, take that on themselves. I mean they're not going to have somebody doing that for them so I like to be kind of the guide and if I'm reading with them, ya know I love to read out loud to them, but there's certain times that I think that's better than others. When I have the chance to read or work with them in a small group, I like to hear them read and guide them through that, umm, or if they're doing an activity, ya know I don't like to tell them all of the answers or exactly where to find them, I like, ya know, to respond with a question and say, "Well, where do you think you could find that? Where do you think you could get that answer?" Umm, to teach them how to problem-solve and do that on their own.

M: Umm, does this role, does it change throughout the day? Is it different for different subjects or the same?

B: I think so. I think I teach subjects differently, I guess. Umm, and maybe if I taught for another five years it would be even more different, umm, I like, ya know, in school I learned about reading centers and that's something that I like because I think that it makes that time, that huge chunk of time, like an hour and a half, go fast for them, which I think is important. If it's a drag for them, it's going to be a drag for me. So I think it makes it go fast for them and I think it gives them the opportunity to do so many different things. Ya know, whereas instead of doing a couple of things everyday, we're doing 4, that's like 20 different things over the week. That's, we do a lot more that way, so I teach reading very differently than I teach other subjects because I have a huge chunk of time for reading. If I had that chunk of time for math, I would probably teach it the same way, but I don't. Ya know, umm, and then religion is different or social studies, it's just different. I think reading is such a focus for second grade that you have the time and that's when parents volunteer, you have all of these components that come together.

M: Hmm, mmm, umm, do you think your role changes when you're working with readers at different levels?

B: Yes. I think when I'm working with more advanced readers, I let them, they're kind of sitting in the driver's seat, ya know, they, they do the reading, ya know I'll ask them questions and I'll ask them to ask questions, umm, but I kinda let them take control to the point where they're kinda at their maximum and I like to challenge them. Struggling readers, ya know it's different. You're still asking them more basic comprehension questions. Ya know, like 'What is the setting?' What is the, who are the characters, all those questions that some of the more advanced readers, I mean they're just going to spit them out anyway. Umm, so yeah I think with the struggling readers, I'm more, I guess, more in charge, in a way, ya know more in control in dictating what we're gonna do, especially if I (ya know they've kind of grown out of the ones we have), but when I was doing the guided reading books, umm, I was much more, ya know, in charge and asking lots of little, like lots of questions, whereas the more advanced ones, I let them kinda read more and ask less, maybe.
M: Hmm, mmm, umm, what role do you think you play in them learning to read?

B: What role do I think I play?

M: (silent nod)

B: I think maybe the biggest role that I play to be honest would be to excite them about reading. I do think that's where I'm most effective with them. Like to excite them and say "I love this author. I'm so excited." I mean I was ecstatic for Steve Jenkins week. I love Steve Jenkins week and they knew it. Like, I had been talking about him all year so when that week comes, it's like Christmas for them. Ya know they know I'm excited about it, they're excited about it. Ya know, they, I thought they were so engaged with those books and excited. I think that's a big role that I play. Umm, even the struggling readers, because of how he writes his books were able to really pick up and read some big words that they may not have been able to read otherwise. Umm, I think that's my main role. (School volunteer dropped off school envelopes.) Umm, but I think they're, uh, I don't know, I'm trying to think. I mean my, I guess maybe that's the role I like to play, too. Ya know, like goof around with them and get them excited and talk about, ya know and think about it and pull them outside the box of the book, like and ya know and they're like 'I'm so scared of all of these animals' and I'm like 'Well, let's think about where all of those animals live and I like to like make them ya know kind of facilitate those thoughts.'

M: Uh, huh, and what role do you think, umm, the interactions students have with each other plays in their learning to read?

B: I think it plays a big role in their learning to read because I honestly think I feel like they, maybe this is a bad thing, they learn a lot, like they learn more from their classmates than sometimes they learn from me they're influenced much more by their classmates and they, umm, ya know when you pair a struggling reader with an accelerated reader together, it's pretty amazing what the struggling reader will do to kind of like live up to what they need to do, umm, and when they talk about what they're reading, when they'll ask each other questions. That was pretty cool today, not that they were doing it as much as I would have liked, but when they were asking like 'well, what did happen then?' Ya know and they were asking different questions about the book they hadn't read yet, showing interest. It was pretty cool to see the interaction back and forth. Umm, and I think, ya know, there's a difference between when a struggling reader is struggling with a word and they, the accelerated reader just tells them what it is than just helps them or like 'You got it.' Ya know, 'you try it,' ya know, whatever. Yeah, I definitely their friends have a big role in encouraging them.

M: Hmm, mmm.
Appendix L

Cross-Domain Analysis

Literacy environment and The Teacher’s Influence

A. buddy reading
B. book talks
C. special assignments for small groups
D. free read time

II. Teacher Actions/Behaviors
A. teacher read-alouds of quality literature
B. teacher enthusiasm
C. author studies
D. heterogeneous groups
E. buddy reading
F. repeated reading
G. free reading
H. reading graphic organizers
I. word work

XIII. A. encourage talk revolving around some assignments are ways to positively impact student interactions
B. create experiences to encourage talk
XIV. A. Not teach students how to interact effectively
B. Only promote interactions related to certain assignments
C. Don’t allow sufficient time to develop the skills involved in interacting with others
D. Not encourage/promote interactions when they are allowed
E. Quiet/silent work when ‘for a grade’

**Perceptions and Attitudes about Reading and Learning to Read**

III. A. it’s fun because it can be funny
B. good because then you get more smart, smarter
C. bring you into a world of imagination AND having fun and well, lots of things
D. good because I like to read a lot because never know what’s going to happen next in a story and if you read and read and read then you can know everything

IV. A. gives information
B. get smarter
C. get into a world of imagination
D. need to read to go on to the next grade
E. can learn things from it
F. gain knowledge
G. stay informed
V.  A. when it’s about animals
B. lots of detail – like Patricia Polacco (really good books, does a lot of them)
D. when bored; likes the ‘fun’ parts of *Rainbow Magic Fairies*
E. when I read fiction books

IX. A. practice a lot/does a lot of reading/ reads everyday
B. read chapter books/read big books
C. don’t struggle with words
D. read books over and over
E. break into chunks
F. go slowly so don’t miss part
G. work hard on reading
H. get addicted are things that good readers do
I. can read very well
J. read so much that he finds out about stuff
K. does a lot of work, i.e. practices their words
L. studies a lot
M. exposed to a wide variety of literature at home

X. A. read aloud
B. help figure out words
C. reads with me
D. help me pick out books are kinds of teacher help that are good for me
G. talks with me and talk and helps us
The When and Why of Student Engagement

VI. A. sometimes it does if it’s good information
   B. yes – in kindergarten
   C. Yeah – when Jack read to me, he knew very big words and he helped me out sounding out whenever I got on a big word

   are reasons/ways/ times that talking to others helps become better reader

VII. A. not at all, not much shows how often allowed to talk to
   B. buddy reading

XI. A. Go to the bathroom
    B. Play with things
    C. Talk to classmates
    D. Walk around classroom are ways to reading avoid
    E. Sit at desk and do nothing
    G. Fake read

   are ways to

XII. A. Read as soon as work is completed
    B. Run finger under words while reading are ways to engagement show
    C. Follow along/look at book while others read
    D. Read during free read time provided

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Appendix M

Metaphor Analysis Results

Context: M: What do you see as your role?
B: I guess I kind of more like to take the guide role.

Source: guide
Target: role as a reading teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide</th>
<th>Reading Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- assist group members in learning more about the area/topic/location and its history</td>
<td>- assist them in learning to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- encourages observations and learning in an interactive and exploratory way</td>
<td>- encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and their own reading; don’t tell them the answer – help them figure it out;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CM: A reading teacher is a guide.

Entailments: A reading teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and reading. While reading in small groups, the reading teacher guides students in their reading. A reading teacher helps students figure out answers through questioning.

*******************************************************

Context: M: What role do you think you play in your students learning to read?
B: I think maybe the biggest role that I play to be honest would be to excite them about reading.

Source: excite them about reading – like a cheerleader
Target: role play in students learning to read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheerleader</th>
<th>Teacher’s Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- excite fans about the game/team</td>
<td>- excite students about reading or a particular book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- choose cheers the fans will enjoy</td>
<td>- choose relevant books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- variety of cheers, routines to get fans excited and keep them engaged</td>
<td>- variety of instructional methods: teacher read-aloud, small group, buddy reading, self-selected reading to get students excited and keep them engaged and motivated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CM: A reading teacher is a cheerleader.

Entailments: A reading teacher works to excite students about reading and sometimes reading a particular book. Choosing relevant, interesting books is an important task of a reading teacher. Utilizing a variety of instructional methods is an important way to excite children about reading and learning how to read.

*****************************************************************************

Context: M: What role do you think the interactions students have with each other plays in their learning to read?

B: When you pair a struggling read with an accelerated reader, it’s amazing what the struggling reader will do to kind of live up to what they need to do.

Source: upward mobility
Target: student-student interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upward Mobility</th>
<th>Student-student interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- difficult to accomplish</td>
<td>- difficult for struggling readers to catch up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- having support is important</td>
<td>- pairing struggling with accelerated reader can give amazing results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- motivation to do better</td>
<td>- peer influence important – motivate to do better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CM: Student-student interactions are like upward mobility for struggling readers.

Entailments: Catching up in reading is a difficult task to accomplish, but having the support of a more able peer can produce amazing results. Peer influence and help is important to help motivate a struggling reader to do better and keep trying.
Context: M: How do you help the readers in your classroom who are struggling with learning how to read?
B: I think they learn very well from each other, the ones that are struggling tend to partner well with the ones that are doing well and they kind of pull their abilities up to that level.

Source: exercise
Target: student-student interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Student-student interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- sometimes need a trainer</td>
<td>- need teacher’s help/training to help learn how to do it well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- takes practice to do it well</td>
<td>- need to practice helping and learning together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- need to create a routine</td>
<td>- need consistency in practicing and working together – do it on a regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- develop muscles and develop self-confidence</td>
<td>- a way to develop reading skills in a non-threatening way and develop self-confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CM: Student-student interactions are like exercise for struggling readers.

Entailments: In order to complete it properly, students need some training or help from the teacher in order to learn how to do it well. Students need practice interacting with others as they learn how to help each other and learn together. Consistency in practicing interacting together appropriately and working together is important in order to develop good interactional skills. Working with others is a good way to develop reading skills in a more non-threatening way and a way to help build self-confidence rather than practicing reading in front of a larger group rather than just one peer.
Appendix N

Patricia Polacco Book Talk

Name __________________  Date __________________

Title: ________________________________________________

Author: _______________________________________________

Is this book fiction or non-fiction? How can you tell? ______________

Setting: ______________________________________________

Does the setting remind you of a place you have been? Where?

Who is telling the story? _________________________________

Main characters: ________________________________________

Which character did you connect with? Why? ______________

Which character would you want to be in the story? Why? ________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

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What words does the author use to describe your favorite character?

_____________________________________________________

Problem: _______________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Solution: _______________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Summary (about 3 sentences): ____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

You would like this book if...___________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

I would recommend/not recommend this book because _________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

One more thing..._____________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________