

**Constructing Meaning through Talk: A Research Study
Examining the Use of Dialogic Discourse in Guided Reading
to Promote Student-Centered Classroom Practices in Primary Classrooms**

by

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Abstract

Teachers have been tackling the best approaches to teaching reading comprehension for decades. The classroom teacher becomes a vital component in improving the critical thinking students must develop within academic settings. Fostering the development of the metacognitive processes needed to support students' ability to think critically and meaningfully before, during, and after reading requires the classroom teacher to utilize a multitude of skills and strategies. One way teachers can encourage and strengthen students' thought processes is through dialogic discourse. Dialogic discourse is thinking and talking about reading at a deeper and more meaningful level. From this discourse, emerges new knowledge and learning. The strategic use of dialogic discourse during small group instruction, specifically during the implementation of the guided reading structure, has the potential to better enhance students' metacognitive processes, which leads to more student-centered classroom practices. An embedded mixed methods study was conducted to understand how teachers and students experience and perceive the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading and to further examine implications which can be made on the use of dialogic teaching in guided reading to promote student-centered classroom practices. Using the social constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2008), this study collected various points of data in order to examine how dialogic discourse might help to develop more student-centered classrooms when strategically placed within the guided reading framework. This study included five primary classroom teachers with intact kindergarten, first

grade, and second grade classrooms in a Southeastern state in the United States. Data were analyzed using the open and focused coding process to potentially develop a theory grounded in the data. Evidence derived from the data supported teacher-participants who made attempts to engage students with more opportunities to read books and have more dialogue around text were able to create opportunities for students to transfer knowledge from one task to the next task. Teacher-participants who made attempts to use questioning as an instructional support to construct meaning also created more student-centered classroom environments as the students were taking more ownership in their learning.

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List of Abbreviations

504.....	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
CCRS	College and Career Readiness Standards
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
ELL	English Language Learners
IEP	Individual Education Programs
P4C	Philosophies for Children
SES	Socioeconomic Status
S	Student

Chapter I. Introduction

Reading is a complex task requiring the reader to have the necessary phonological awareness skills to match phonemes to graphemes, the orthography expertise in place to understand the relationship between phonemes and graphemes in written text, and the metacognitive abilities to derive meaning from print (Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2015). Early in the life of a child, they need to be able to extrapolate meaning attached to an array of seemingly abstract visual symbols in order to be successfully literate (Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2015). Some would say the purpose of reading is to be able to interpret the text in ways which produces a meaningful construct of new knowledge (Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2015). Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton (2015) described literacy as one's capability of using written text in order to develop and share knowledge in an effort to fully function within society. They further explain literacy acquisition as an intertwined system in which genetic, neurobiological, and environmental factors are working together, with the environmental factors being the only component capable of direct modification (Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2015). One such environmental factor impacting literacy is the elementary school classroom.

In the classroom, teachers are tasked with producing students who are not only capable of decoding the sounds letters make in order to form words, but teachers must also produce students who are able to comprehend what they are reading (Lemke, 1989). As the student approaches the printed message, they should be engaging in the metacognitive processes in order to support

comprehension (Lemke, 1989). Therefore, as the student takes on the written message, the student must successfully decode and make meaning, so comprehension is supported (Lemke, 1989). In order to build meaning around the text, the student has to interpret the message in a way which makes sense and promotes comprehension (Lemke, 1989). When students read for meaning, they are reading for comprehension. Comprehending is the ability to summarize the message, analyze the meaning, and synthesize the new knowledge with existing knowledge (Lemke, 1989). This construction of knowledge creates opportunities for students to transfer learning from one context to the next.

Teachers have been tackling the best approaches to teaching reading comprehension for decades. More recently, there has been increased acknowledgement of the importance of not only teaching reading and writing to create literate students, but also the intentional teaching of oral language skills. This poses a challenging task for teachers as students are entering school with a wide-range of abilities. Rivalland (2004) explained that even students in the same community with outwardly similar upbringings are coming to school with different skill sets. Rivalland (2004) wrote, “these differences in oral language structures and uses impact on how and in what ways children are likely to take up school literacies” (p. 156).

Therefore, the classroom teacher becomes a vital component in improving the critical thinking students must develop within academic settings. Teachers must be “skilled at observing and recording children’s oral language with insight and understanding; teachers who can build upon and transform the language these children bring from their homes and communities so that they can develop a language repertoire that will enable them to fully engage with school and subject specific discourses” (Rivalland, 2004, p. 156-157). Fostering the development of the metacognitive processes needed to support students’ ability to think critically and meaningful

before, during, and after reading requires the classroom teacher to utilize a multitude of skills and strategies. One way teachers can encourage and strengthen students' thought processes is through dialogic discourse. Dialogic discourse is the use of dialogue centered around text for the purpose of engaging metacognitive processes, sharing and exchanging ideas and challenging opinions and points of view. The strategic use of dialogic discourse during small group instruction, specifically during the implementation of the guided reading structure, has the potential to better enhance students' metacognitive processes, which leads to more student-centered classroom practices.

Statement of the Problem

The 21st century classroom has changed greatly from the previous century when the main focus of instruction was to memorize facts. Students are now expected to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their learning in order to create new ideas and draw evidence-based conclusions. There has also been a shift to more student-centered classroom practices, where student voice, interest, and lived experiences play a vital role in the learning environment. A main concern within the context of the 21st century classroom is the vast amount of information available to students in a multitude of formats (Alexander, 2012). Students have an almost infinite amount of resources at their disposal to analyze and synthesize in order to build knowledge, which can be challenging and overwhelming for those learning to read (Alexander, 2012). These resources include access to literature, computers and smart devices with the World Wide Web, Applications (Apps), and various software. As Allington and McGill-Franzen (2000) pointed out, access to resources and curriculum can “make good teaching more likely” but it is a high-quality teacher who makes the biggest impact on student achievement (p. 143).

Strategic, responsive teachers need to intentionally model and teach students how to use the resources available in order to best support student success. Teachers have a unique role in transitioning classrooms from monologic to dialogic which requires them to be skilled in dialogic teaching practices (Nystrand et al., 2001). Most importantly, teachers need to view themselves as teachers teaching students, not, teachers covering the curriculum (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000). Engaging in authentic dialogue with students, centered around the literary resources is one way teachers can foster connections and deepen understanding of the text. “Facilitating effective discussion of texts is an essential task facing literacy teachers who aim to help students develop into thoughtful, critical readers” (McElhone, 2015, p. 156). Dialogic discourse allows opportunities for students to discuss text in meaningful ways, promoting communication, collaboration, and critical thinking which promotes a more student-centered environment. Educational psychologist, Wittrock (1991) explained, “Problem solving, inferencing, and ability to apply knowledge creatively, rather than routinely, have and will become increasingly important to individual success and to national success” (p. 110). Today’s learners must be able to communicate, collaborate, and critically think about learning in order to formulate new ideas and perpetuate knowledge (Wittrock, 1991).

However, many teachers are forced to use a scripted curriculum which restricts autonomy and choice within the classroom (McElhone, 2015). Scripted curriculum and limited autonomy in the classroom significantly limits the teacher’s ability to engage students in authentic dialogue around text to challenge students’ thinking and extend their leaning (McElhone, 2015). This also limits what teachers are able to assess, limiting what teachers can learn about their students’ language and literacy learning. “Dialogic teaching [discourse] runs counter to the pre-scripted, tightly controlled instruction specified in many elementary literacy curricula. It is spontaneous,

fluid, and responsive to the ideas that arise in the moment” (McElhone, 2015, p. 157). Dialogic discourse is thinking and talking about reading at a deeper, more meaningful level. Through discourse, emerges new knowledge and learning. Discourse in the classroom can be used as a tool to make “connections between past, present, and future learning” (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 21). This is especially important for the primary grade students, as they begin to emerge as self-thinkers. As Dorn and Jones (2012) wrote, “teacher’s language is critical for guiding successful experiences that shape higher-level understanding” (p. 23). Therefore, if educators want to see students who are not only strong readers, but students who are also capable of developing their metacognitive process to foster learning, they should be supporting the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading instruction.

An embedded mixed methods study using the social constructivist grounded theory approach is needed to understand how teachers and students experience and perceive the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading and to further examine if any implications can be made on the use of dialogic teaching in guided reading in promoting a more student-centered classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives guide this research in order to explore the use of dialogic discourse during guided reading instruction which include social constructivism, instructional scaffolding, dialogic teaching, and metacognitive processing. Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; Bakhtin, 1986) provides the foundation for which all ideas and concepts emerge. As teachers provide students with learning opportunities, the student connects background knowledge, experiences, and ideas with new concepts and learning in an attempt to construct

new knowledge. This construction of knowledge is best supported through experiences with others and with active interactions with others.

Within the classroom, teachers provide students with experiences in which they can engage in promoting construction of new knowledge. Guided reading allows an opportunity for teachers to provide students with instructional level text and activities which fall into their zone of proximal development (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 23). This zone of proximal development is the difference between what the student can accomplish on their own, what they can accomplish with some guidance from the teacher and what they cannot accomplish, even with support. As Vygotsky (1978) wrote, “the zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed the buds or flowers of development rather than the "fruits" of development” (p. 23). With appropriate support or scaffolding from the teacher, a student can find success with the task they have been given (Dorn & Jones, 2012).

Determining the appropriate scaffolds requires the teacher to know their students’ abilities and be strategic in their teaching. Scaffolding is the intentional instructional choice the teacher makes so the student can productively achieve success. The level of scaffolding depends on the students’ needs and the student’s response to the scaffolding (Dorn & Jones, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Wood, 2002). Strategic scaffolding requires the teacher to be in-tune with the student’s needs and to respond in a way that does not take responsibility of the learning task away from the student. The scaffolding process is “a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 96). The scaffold should be a temporary structure put

in place to support the student within their current zone of proximal development (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 23). Scaffolding can be a simple prompt at point of difficulty, such as, *'try that again'*, or it can be more complex, such as, a graphic organizer or a variation in an experiment. One way a teacher can appropriately scaffold to support students' construction of new knowledge is through the use of dialogic discourse. Dialogic discourse is the explicit use of discussion around literature to support comprehension. The use of language, the dialogic discourse, becomes the scaffold.

Dialogic discourse is the use of dialogue around text to support comprehension. But the use of language is not simply asking closed-ended questions. It is engaging the students in meaningful conversations, allowing students to challenge ideas, make connections, and think deeply about the meaning of the text. Bakhtin (1986) views dialogue as a necessary condition for being in the world. Bakhtin does not view language as a tool, but "as a living source of insight" (Mirsha, 2015, p. 74). He emphasizes words forming concepts of their own versus using language to understand concepts (Bakhtin, 1986). Teachers use dialogue to promote learning and development. The words teachers use require students to construct meaning in an effort to process new concepts and ideas. Teachers plan specific questions to encourage students to think critically about the text, and then facilitate the discussion. This facilitation of discussion requires the students to think deeply about the text and encourages students to take ownership of their learning (Alexander, 2008; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). The use of discussion is important for having students think about their thinking; to have students engage their metacognitive processes. "Teachers have the power to use language as a scaffold, or a tool, to engage in authentic and intentional conversations around specific knowledge, skills, and strategies" (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p.19).

Vygotsky (1978) described the use of language as a child's first means of communication with others in their environment. It is through these conversations, the child is able to develop internal speech to begin organizing their complex mental processes (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, "the acquisition of language can provide a paradigm for the entire problem of the relation between learning and development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). Within the classroom, this acquisition happens when teachers use dialogue to promote learning and development. Teachers plan specific questions to encourage students to think critically about the text, and then facilitate the discussion. This facilitation of discussion requires the students to think deeply about the text and encourages students to take ownership of their learning. Vygotsky (1978) explained, "the more complex the action demanded by the situation and the less direct its solution, the greater the importance played by speech in the operation as a whole. Sometimes speech becomes of such vital importance that, if not permitted to use it, young children cannot accomplish the given task" (p. 25-26).

Through appropriate scaffolding, such as the use of dialogic discourse, students are engaging their metacognitive processes to connect prior knowledge with new understandings. These connections construct new knowledge, leading to students who are able to think critically and fully comprehend text passages. Ultimately, the metacognitive process promotes the student's ability to transfer knowledge from one setting to the next. Flavell (1979) defined differences between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experiences. Metacognitive knowledge is thinking about cognitive process, meaning, to think about thinking (Flavell, 1979). Metacognitive experiences are the actual use of metacognitive strategies (Flavell, 1979). "Metacognitive experiences can affect your metacognitive knowledge by adding to it, deleting

from it, or revising it” (Flavell, 1979, p. 908). This transfer of knowledge connects old knowledge with new learning, deepens understandings, and generates new ideas.

If teachers are considering the metacognitive experiences they are providing their students, they can no longer teach students to learn isolated facts about isolated events. Educational psychologist, Wittrock (1991) described how literacy has always been an integral part of our history, but literacy in the 21st century will be of more importance and meaning to ones’ life and the world in general. In the 21st century, teachers must provide students with opportunities to make connections, to apply knowledge across contexts, and to develop new ideas from current concepts. This happens when teachers, who appropriately scaffold instruction, provide opportunities for students at their instructional level, through the use of dialogic discourse, to engage in the metacognitive processes, which promotes the transfer of knowledge. When all of this occurs, knowledge is constructed in a way that best supports student success, ultimately leading to advances in student reading abilities and creating more student-centered classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study using the social constructivist grounded theory approach was to examine the strategic use of dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework to promote student-centered classroom practices in primary grade classrooms in the Southeastern United States and examine the perceptions of teachers and students in regards to their experiences with dialogic discourse. Additionally, based on the examinations, the purpose of the study was to potentially develop a theory of a teacher’s use of dialogic discourse within guided reading to promote student-centered practices. In following

with the social constructivist grounded theory framework (Charmaz, 2006; Bryant & Charmaz, 2013; Charmaz, 2014), the researcher collected data for this study by:

- Conducting a baseline review of literature to refine the research questions and have a general idea of the concepts
- Collecting various points of data through five teacher-participant pre- and post-interviews, small group discussions with student-participants, observations and field notes of at least three guided reading lessons per teacher-participant, debriefing sessions following each guided reading lesson, and student-participant pre- and post- reading assessment scores
- Analyzing data through constant comparative analysis using open and focused coding to develop concepts
- Using memoing to reflect on emerging ideas and make connections between codes using the literature to create categories grounded in data
- Creating a visual diagram of any theoretical theme developed from the categories
- Writing the findings to present theory derived from the data

Research Questions

The following questions were used to examine the use of dialogic discourse during guided reading instruction:

1. How does the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading promote a more student-centered classroom?
 - a. What are the factors hindering or encouraging dialogic discourse?
2. How do the shared dialogic experiences between teacher and student help inform classroom practices?

Significance of the Study

The contributions of this study would be of interest to teachers, literacy coaches, administrators, and other educational personnel making decisions about students' literacy instruction. The elementary school classroom is a dynamic space, which requires educators to make decisions at a constant rate throughout the day. As new technologies, teaching materials, literature, and other relevant tools emerge, the classroom changes. As these changes occur, educators must be able to shift their instructional practices and selected curriculum to make decisions in the best interest of the students. "Within the academic context of schools, the tests and curricula designed with the purpose of supporting reading in the 21st century present an array of motivational, cognitive, and socio-contextual demands and issues that pose challenges for the developing reader" (Alexander, 2012, p. 268). In the 21st century classroom, this means stepping away from the traditional, teacher-centered classroom. In the traditional setting, the teacher spends the most time talking, while students spend most of the day quiet. Students are expected to provide the teacher with answers to questions which the teacher deems right or wrong. In most teacher-centered classrooms, students are not given the opportunity to collaborate, think critically or creatively, or challenge the answers to questions. The use of dialogic discourse in the classroom confronts the expectations of the traditional teacher-centered classroom and positions the discussion to the students.

Promoting a student-centered classroom creates students who are better able to construct meaning, generate new ideas, be risk-takers, and ultimately, decision-makers. This study aimed to examine how the use of dialogic discourse promoted a more student-centered classroom, where teachers and students communicate and collaborate together to dig deeper into

comprehending of text, creating students who are able to think critically and transfer old knowledge to generate new ideas.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study have been identified and were accounted for throughout the study. The first limitation of the study was the methodology selected. As Creswell (2015) explained, grounded theory occurs in an environment constructed by the researcher and the participants. Answers to the research questions were constructed through concept development and emergence of themes. As data are collected, these constructions were verified (Schwandt, 2015, p. 63). A thick, rich description of each of the data collection points were detailed in order to provide sound evidence to claims made. The researcher and the teacher-participants also kept reflexive memos to provide a more complete picture of the findings. Additionally, the teacher-participants who participated in the study may be uniquely different from those who chose not to participate. Several validation strategies were put in place to ensure the study was not weakened by the limitations. Peer-debriefing and member-checking were used to ensure the conclusions found by the researcher are grounded in the data. Peer-debriefing allowed for the researcher to “confide in trusted and knowledgeable colleagues and use them as a sounding board for one or more purposes” (Schwandt, 2015, p. 230). For the purpose of this study, it was to ensure the theory being derived from the data were a true reflection of the experiences and implications of the study. Member-checking allowed for the data to be continuously interpreted to ensure common themes and ideas were being derived, which is “simply another way of generating data and insight” (Schwandt, 2015, p. 196). After each lesson observation, the debriefing sessions provided opportunities for researcher and the teacher-participants to discuss the experience and analyze the data collected. Additionally, as Schwandt (2015) pointed out, “member-checking

also allows the participant the courtesy of knowing what will be said about them and their experiences” (p. 196). After writing the findings, the researcher sent the teacher-participants portions of the study for them to verify. Teacher-participants made no requests for changes to be made. Additional strategies to ensure trustworthiness are detailed in Chapter III.

Steps were taken to control for quantitative data integrity included limiting threats to validity. Three threats to validity in the current design included practice effect, drop-out, and sampling. In terms of practice effect or regression to the mean, taking the same assessment multiple times can result in improving scores or natural regression to the population mean. This was controlled by using a standardized, validated assessment, the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2006). Additionally, the DRA used to determine students’ reading level provided different texts so students were not reading the same material during the pre- and post-assessments. Dropout or mortality occurred as teachers had the option to withdrawal at any time or students may have moved away or been absent. This was difficult to control for, so the researcher tried to have a large enough sample size before beginning the study to still gain valuable information. However, the number of students who returned parental consent and minor assent forms was low. While no student-participants dropped out of the study, some students were absent on one or both of the reading level assessment dates, so their data were not included in the study. Finally, sampling may have been a threat since the classrooms were intact, making it important to look at various aspects of the classroom dynamics while analyzing data. This included the number of English Language Learners (ELL), students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (504) Plans, socio-economic status, and other aspects related to the sample. The researcher was working with teachers who were

willing to participate in the study, which may lead to limitations. This was described in the analysis and noted as a limitation in the study.

Delimitations of the Study

A delimitation of the study was the data collection and analysis were limited to the participants in the study. It is possible in another setting with different participants, there could be different findings. The data collection and analysis were also limited to the material and curriculum selected and available for this study. It is possible other material choices may promote different findings.

Assumptions of the Study

It was assumed, since the teacher-participants signed consent to participate in the study, they would actively participate in professional development sessions and debriefing sessions outlined in the study. The researcher acted as a participant-observer, so it was assumed the teacher-participants were willing to work with the researcher throughout the study. Additionally, since the teacher-participants had agreed to participate in the study, it was assumed the teacher-participants participating in the study answered honestly and openly during pre- and post- semi-structured interviews. The study had been designed to ensure saturation of data, however, it was assumed the findings of the study are unique to those participating and the implications from the study looked to promote a deeper understanding of the concepts, not to generalize.

Description of Concepts

Guided Reading

Guided reading is a small group, guided practice structure put in place to allow teachers to work closely with students to monitor and scaffold reading instruction. Teachers assess students' reading abilities to determine students' reading level, in addition to determining their

independent, instructional, and frustrational reading level. A student who reads a text with 95-100% accuracy is independently reading. If the student reads a text with 90-94% accuracy, this is their instructional level. If they are reading text below 89% accuracy, this is their frustrational level. Teachers form small groups within the classroom in attempts to organize the needs of students and teach to the various instructional reading levels of their students. The teacher plans the guided reading lesson in an intentional, well-thought out way, considering the students' needs within the group, the selection of text and materials, lesson objectives and focus points, and how to best demonstrate strategic reading behaviors (Gaffner, Johnson, Torres-Elias, & Dryden, 2014). Guided reading groups consist of a small number of student, usually no more than 4-6 students who are at approximately the same developmental reading stage. These groups are dynamic, flexible groupings so students can be moved between groups as their needs change.

The guided reading structure is considerably different from the more traditional forms of reading instruction that use choral reading or popcorn reading (Gaffner et al., 2014). Students in guided reading groups read instructional level text quietly, in a whisper voice (Gaffner et al., 2014) while the teacher appropriately scaffolds the learning at point of difficulty. Teachers must intentionally match their instructional practices to the student's current reading abilities in order to teach strategic reading behaviors (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). These strategic reading behaviors include: decoding when meaning has broken down, reading with fluency, self-monitoring, cross-checking, and critically thinking about the meaning of the text (Gaffner et al., 2014). The comprehension component is a necessary aspect, as the student must think critically to answer questions, develop vocabulary, summarize and analyze the text, engage in thoughtful dialogue around the text, and write responses to the reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Generally speaking, most students are able to decode and accurately read words, while their comprehension of the text remains at a surface level or lower level of thinking, such as only being able to retell details from the story (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). It is the classroom teacher who must strategically make decisions in order to appropriately facilitate the students' problem-solving abilities so they can effectively engage in actions of self-regulated readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Clay, 2001). Teachers use of dialogic discourse will promote students' critical thinking and problem-solving processes which will expand their comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Dialogic Discourse

One way to encourage and guide the metacognitive processes of students who are actively constructing meaning while reading, is through dialogue. Dialogic discourse is the use of discussion around text to promote comprehension. Teachers have the power to use language as a scaffold, or a tool, to engage in authentic and intentional conversations around specific knowledge, skills, and strategies (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 19). These intentional conversations can promote students' metacognitive processes and their ability to apply information across various learning experiences. Meaning does not stop formulating when the student completes the reading but continues to be constructed as the student uses strategies to interpret the text and make meaning (Dorn & Soffos, 2005, p. 7). Through dialogic discourse, the teacher must be able to observe the student's verbal and nonverbal cues in order to adjust their own language and appropriately respond (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 20). "Learning situated in the give and take of dialogic discourse is thus premised not on the recitation of recalled information, but rather on a dynamic transformation of understandings through interaction" (Nystrand et al., 2001, p.4). Through these interactions, the student gains a deeper meaning and comprehension of the text

and is able to apply new knowledge to new tasks. As Dorn & Soffos (2005) explained, “Comprehension results from the mind’s ability to make links and ask questions regarding the particular reading event” (p. 6).

The use of dialogue within guided reading offers unique opportunities to create student-centered, personalized learning experiences. These experiences promote social constructions of new knowledge with known knowledge, which are linear and transferable.

Transfer of Knowledge

The ultimate goal of instruction in the 21st century classroom is for students to transfer knowledge from one context to the next so learning can be expanded upon and new ideas can be explored and formulated. It is through dialogic discourse that the student is able to engage in meaningful conversations, connecting old knowledge with new concepts, ideas, skills, and strategies. As the student builds these connections, they are transferring knowledge from one task to the next. Teachers must be able to provide opportunities for these experiences to promote this transfer of knowledge. Teaching for transfer then becomes an important component of students constructing knowledge.

McIlwain (2012) asserted, “children must develop a complex and flexible use of language and language discourses in order to succeed in school” (p. 21). Students’ ability to use language and discourse in a way which connects concepts, challenges current opinions, and generates new ideas demonstrates innovative and dynamic thinking. In order for students to make meaningful connections to their own life, between texts and other media sources, and to the world around them, teachers need to create time in class for dialogic discourse. Teachers should be working to create a student-centered classroom in which they are teaching for the transfer of ideas from one learning experience to the next.

Student-Centered Classrooms

Traditional classrooms focus on teacher-directed instruction, with little input from students. Teachers keep control of the learning environment as students are passive learners needing the knowledge and expertise of the teacher. In sharp contrast, student-centered classrooms value student voice and choice in their learning. In a student-centered classroom collaboration is vital and students are actively engaged in the learning environment. When considering the best way to teach 21st century primary students how to read and make sense of their reading, the learning environment, which is possible of being manipulated, is something educators must consider. Taking a student-centered approach to small group guided practice instruction means student voice is encouraged and valued. Davis (2010) pointed out, “As we strive to meet the needs of learners from diverse settings, the words and experiences of children should help to guide our choices in literacy instruction” (p. 54).

Organization of the Study

The study was organized in the following manner: Chapter I introduced the study, presenting the problem, the purpose, and the research questions driving the study. Additionally, Chapter I defined the limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and major terms. Chapter II included a preliminary review of the related literature concerning the guided reading structure, the use of dialogic discourse to engage students’ metacognitive processes to promote student achievement, teaching for transfer, and student-centered classrooms. Chapter III reported the methodology utilized in the study. This will include descriptive information about the population and sample, instrumentation and measured used, the data collection and the data analysis. Chapter IV presented the findings of the study, while Chapter V included a discussion of the findings supported by robust review of literature, summary of results, conclusion, implications,

and recommendations for further research. All references and appendices were included at the end of the study.

Chapter II. Preliminary Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study was to examine the strategic use of dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework to promote student-centered classroom practices in primary grade classrooms in the Southeastern United States and examine the perceptions of teachers and students in regards to their experiences with dialogic discourse. Additionally, based on the examinations, the purpose of the study was to potentially develop a theory of a teacher's use of dialogic discourse within guided reading to promote student-centered practices.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to examine the use of dialogic discourse during guided reading instruction:

1. How does the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading promote a more student-centered classroom?
 - a. What are the factors hindering or encouraging dialogic discourse?
2. How do the shared dialogic experiences between teacher and student help inform classroom practices?

Dialogic Discourse within Guided Reading

Within the classroom, a range of student abilities exist. Students present at various levels

of academic understanding, background knowledge, and life experiences. Classroom teachers are charged with the task of getting to know their students in a way that allows them to plan instructional opportunities which would promote learning success in each of their students. This can be challenging in rooms of 20-25, or more, students with only one classroom teacher. Additionally, teachers are also tasked with integrating reading, writing, and oral language in a way that best engages students in the metacognitive processes. Baker et al. (2015) pointed out:

Language should be incorporated into reading, writing, speaking, and listening instruction. Speaking and listening should also be incorporated into reading and writing instruction and viewed within the context of language. For example, for a teacher to know how students are interpreting the text...he or she will need to ask students, either in writing or orally, to explain their interpretation of the words and phrases contained in the text. (p. 265)

The guided reading framework was developed as a way to give more personalized, individualized instruction in reading to all students. The flexible and dynamic small groups setting allows the teacher to provide the appropriate scaffolding within the student's zone of proximal development, while authentically and meaningfully integrating reading, writing, and oral language.

Guided Reading

A review of the literature on guided reading informed our knowledge in several areas. First, guided reading is missing from many classrooms, and second, if schools claim to be using guided reading, many teachers lack the training and expertise to effectively implement guided reading (Fisher, 2008). Fisher (2008) conducted a multi-case case study to explore the use of guided reading in the classroom and what it actually looked like in real classrooms. Through this

exploration, within the classrooms used in the study, the research seemed to support teachers' lack of knowledge in how to effectively use guided reading. Fisher (2008) found the teachers she studied often had students read aloud but failed to engage the students in developing strategic reading behaviors, encourage critical thinking as a way to analyze and respond to text, or teach comprehension strategies to support meaning. From her studies, Fisher (2008) drew conclusions suggesting teachers struggle to make connections between students' background knowledge and the text being read, teachers neglected the use of alternative strategies to support meaning around the text, and teachers were fearful of relinquishing control of the conversations around the text which resulted in the teachers struggling to ask higher-level thinking questions. If teachers were able to develop and ask a more rigorous question, they were unable to follow-up with more challenging questions, making the initial question ineffective.

Researchers (Gaffner et al, 2014) conducted a mixed methods study examining if small group guided reading practices would significantly improve the reading assessment scores of struggling readers participating in the study, along with exploring the possible outcomes this type of instruction would have on the preservice teachers teaching the guided reading lessons. After engaging struggling readers in the guided reading process, results showed significant improvements in the struggling readers scores on reading assessments. The average struggling readers who participated in the guided reading lessons for one semester grew approximately one-month in reading level, while those who participated for an entire year, grew by approximately six-month reading levels. Preservice teachers facilitating the guided reading lessons also felt the benefits of the study, as they reported a deeper understanding of their individual students' needs and reading abilities. This study supports the impact guided reading instruction can make when used to support students in reading.

In a study conducted by Kouri, Selle, and Riley (2006), researchers analyzed the type of feedback given to students with language delays during guided reading lessons. The researchers were trying to determine if reading comprehension was more greatly impacted when students were given meaning-based corrective feedback versus decoding-based corrective feedback. Results were mixed, showing students who were given pre-reading meaning-based feedback needed less feedback during the reading, however, students who were given decoding-based corrective back during the lesson made more miscued words corrections. Overall, researchers felt a combination of both types of feedback, meaning-based and decoding-based corrective feedback should be used to promote deeper comprehension of the text. This is important to consider when examining how discourse around a text during guided reading might impact student comprehension.

Guided reading as a framework for teaching reading has been shown to create successful readers (Clay, 1985; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). However, a key component in developing readers who are able to decode and read for meaning is the use of dialogic discourse.

Dialogic Discourse

Dialogic discourse is the intentional use of discussion before, during, and after reading to promote understanding of text in a way which students are able to summarize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the message. Boyd and Markarian (2011), through the use of discourse analysis, studied what it meant to be a dialogic teacher. Their study focused on analyzing seven-minute discussions of nine-year-old students in a main stream classroom after being exposed to a year of a dialogic teacher. This particular classroom engaged in a morning meeting where the use of literary discussions which led to literary writing was practiced. Time to read and discussions to develop a deeper understanding of the reading were honored each day and students were eager

to participate. The classroom teacher understood his role as being an active listener and asking questions to encourage dialogue and promote critical thinking. Each talking point the teacher makes when discussing the reading began with a student's observation. The researchers expressed how the teacher's intentional use of dialogic discourse created opportunities to fully develop their close reading and deep, critical thinking. In addition, the researchers explored the stance teachers take on dialogic discourse and how they attached meaning to the use of dialogic discourse. Boyd and Markarian (2011) noted the teachers who use dialogic discourse often viewed a student's lack of comprehension of a text to be an issue of "poor connectivity between the conceptual awareness a student currently has in his or her everyday knowledge and the school knowledge a teacher is asking the student to learn" (p. 521). These teachers seek to understand the knowledge their students have and the knowledge they are gaining, taking a dialogic approach.

Another study which led to implications worth further exploration was conducted by Reznitskaya and Gline in 2013. Reznitskaya and Gline (2013) used a mixed methods approach to examine the experiences of elementary school students in traditional classroom settings versus dialogic-focused classrooms. Researchers examined data collected from regular instruction classrooms and classrooms using a specific *Philosophies for Children* (P4C) instructional approach. P4C centers around dialogic discourse from a pedagogical standpoint and all instructional moves are based on this established framework. Findings from their study show teachers who use dialogic discourse ask more open, divergent questions which led to students answering questions with more detailed and lengthily response when compared to the regular instruction classroom students who provided surface-answers to questions. Reznitskaya and Gline (2013) also cited evidence supporting students in the dialogic-focused classrooms enjoy

assigned readings and participating in class discussions more so than the regular instruction classroom students. Their focus on the perspectives of students in dialogic classrooms adds substantive knowledge to this field of research and implies dialogic discourse is a necessary and important component of reading instruction.

In a study conducted by Skidmore, Perez-Parent, and Arnfield (2003), researchers looked to examine the dialogue taking place during guided reading small group instruction. Researchers spent time in four different elementary school classrooms, recording discussions during guided reading groups and analyzing the data. Results indicated teacher-talk dominates conversations during guided reading with very little dialogic discourse taking place. Researchers noted the teachers' use of closed-ended or one-right answer, bounded questions as the prominent form of questioning. Teachers rarely engaged students in dialogic discussions around text. Skidmore et al. (2003) expressed the need for students to take more control of the conversations and engage in more discourse during guided reading sessions. This should also be considered when determining how to best promote student-centered classrooms.

Student-Centered Classrooms

Student-centered classrooms are distinctly different from the traditional, teacher-centered classroom. In a student-centered classroom, inquiry and curiosity drive instructional practices as students are encouraged to communicate and collaborate in a way which allows them to take ownership of their learning. Students actively problem-solve and makes decisions with the facilitation of the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher serves as a source of knowledge as they facilitate the learning of their students.

Brough, a researcher in New Zealand conducted a qualitative study in 2012 focusing on primary school teachers intentional use of a student-centered curriculum integration. Through

various points of data, including “semi-structured interviews, focus group meetings, informal electronic and face-to-face discussions, naturalistic observations, work samples and photographs”, several themes emerged which included a stronger sense of community, the need for more skillful and strategic questioning by the teacher, and the teacher’s ability to think more democratically which influences the co-construction of curriculum (p. 352). Brough (2012) found student-centered curriculum integration created more engaged students with more relevant and equitable learning opportunities. Brough (2012) wrote, “The teachers found that by slowly increasing the level of student inclusion they gained the confidence and competence to collaboratively co-construct curriculum with students” (p. 345). This study demonstrates the power of teachers taking a student-centered approach in the classrooms.

In a study conducted by Martlew, Ellis, Stephen, and Ellis (2010), researchers examined the experiences of six primary teachers and their students as student centered practices were implemented. The active learning pedagogy was studied through lesson observations and semi-structured interviews. Researchers also randomly called parents of the student-participants to ask the parents if the students talked about their school experiences and what they shared. Results from the study imply students in student-centered classrooms enjoy active learning environments and discuss their experiences outside of school. Classrooms where a more active learning environment was in place had higher amounts of talk between students. However, there was a noticeable difference between children in high and low socioeconomic (SES) homes. Students in low SES homes engaged in very little discourse with the teacher compared to those from high SES homes. When considering the needs of students, all students need interactions with their teacher to encourage oral language skills development. Educators need to consider how

discourse with all students can encourage active learning environments that promote student-centered classroom practices.

Another study which examined student-centered and teacher-centered classroom practices in diverse primary schools to better understand the types of lessons occurring in classrooms and how differences in grade-levels, gender, and ethnicity influences the types of lessons planned (Alford et al., 2015). Researchers focused on the classroom environment, student behaviors during lessons, and the teacher's stance on instructional practices. Results from the study show teachers who take a more student-centered pedagogical stance and teach more developmentally appropriate lessons were more likely to have engaged students exploring concepts and participating in discourse. This was opposite of what was found to be true in classrooms where teachers took a more teacher-directed approach. Alford (2015) concluded "The findings are important, since young children continue to be taught in a direct instructional manner that focuses on students' test performance—despite research showing the unfavorable effects that highly teacher-centered, scripted classrooms have on young students' engagement and learning outcomes" (p. 623).

The preliminary examination of existing research on student-centered classroom practices supports the student-centered approach as being more favorable in engaging students and their construction of knowledge.

Summary

The beginning phases of the literature review show that while guided reading can be an effective practice in the classroom, dialogic discourse may have the potential to create opportunities for teachers to provide student-centered classroom experiences for their students. A review of the literature served to provide some basic understandings of topics and concepts being

examined and to help refine the research questions, with the understanding that scholarly research related to the central questions will be continuously examined as the data are collected and analyzed, and themes begin to emerge. Traditional grounded theory theorists (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) cautioned against clouding the mind with preconceived ideas and assumptions which might limit the findings and put constraints on the research. However, modern grounded theory theorists (Charmaz, 2006; Bryant & Charmaz, 2013) expressed the importance of having a basic understanding of previous literature in order to be reflexive, especially those just beginning in their fields. As Bryant and Charmaz (2013) explained, “An open mind does not imply an empty head” (p. 20). This review of the literature provided the framework to begin examining the research questions and were reexamined again in Chapter IV of the study. Grounded theory requires a reexamination of the literature in order to connect the emerging themes from the study to previous research findings in an effort to keep the data grounded. The studies presented in this chapter served to provide a foundational understanding as the study was put into action.

Chapter III. Methods

Introduction

Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960's, grounded theory has continued to develop as researchers have adopted and adapted the framework over the decades (Charmaz, 2006). Bryant and Charmaz (2013) defined grounded theory as a qualitative form of conducting research which “focuses on creating conceptual frameworks, or theories, through building inductive analysis from the data” (p. 608). This method of inquiry looks to derive a theory from an experience, process, or phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Grounded theory method “favors analysis over description, fresh categories over preconceived ideas and extant theories, and systematically focused sequential data collection over large initial samples” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2013, p. 608). This design requires multiple data points, with several stages of data collection and analysis. Data analysis began once the first datum was collected and helped to refine and shape data collection throughout the study as the data collection and analysis in grounded theory are complementary and iterative (Rose, Spinks, & Canhoto, 2015). Data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously throughout the study and the data were put through several stages of refinement to ensure themes were not being forced or miscoded (Bryant & Charmaz, 2013).

Charmaz (2006), one of the first researchers to establish a constructivist grounded theory standpoint wrote about how an “inquiring mind, persistence, and innovative data-gathering

approaches can bring a researcher into new worlds and in touch with rich data” (p. 13).

Constructivist ground theory relies heavily on the use the participants’ voice and keeping the participant’s words intact during analysis to gain understanding and insight into the phenomena (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Therefore, the need for rich data is crucial to get “beneath the surface of social and subjective life” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 13). Charmaz (2008) continued to expand on the constructivist grounded theory by developing a set of social constructivist assumptions and 21st century grounded theory principles. Interestingly, these assumptions are in line with Glaser’s original assumptions of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008). The four assumptions of social constructivist grounded theory include: “Reality is constructed under particular conditions”, research emerges from interactions, positionality of both the researcher and the participant should be taken into account, and the researcher and participant “co-construct the data- data are a *product* of the research process, not simply observed objects of it” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402). The four 21st century grounded theory principles include: treat the research process itself as a social construction, scrutinize research decisions and directions, improvise methodological and analytic strategies throughout the research process, and collect sufficient data to discern and document how research participants construct their lives and worlds (Charmaz, 2008, p. 403). For the purpose of this study, the social constructivist grounded theory assumptions will be used in combination with the 21st century methodological principles and approaches.

Research Questions

The following questions will be used to examine the use of dialogic discourse during guided reading instruction:

1. How does the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading promote a more student-centered classroom?
 - a. What are the factors hindering or encouraging dialogic discourse?
2. How do the shared dialogic experiences between teacher and student help inform classroom practices?

Role of the Researcher and Reflexivity

The role of the researcher in grounded theory is an integral part of the research process. This reflexivity is important for the researcher to identify their epistemological stance, in addition to clearly exploring their professional and personal experiences, which influence how they interact with the data. Schwandt (2015) defines reflexivity as “the process of critical self-reflection on one’s biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and so forth” (p. 268). Reflexivity is about how the researcher positions themselves within the study. Creswell (2008) approached the concept of reflexivity in a research study as when “the writer is conscious of the bias, values, and experiences that he or she brings” (p. 216). For this social constructivist grounded theory study, it was important for me to consider my position within the classroom, as an educator and as a researcher. Throughout the course of the study, I continually examined my stance regarding dialogic discourse, guided reading, and student-centered classrooms.

As a former primary grade teacher, I dedicated my time in the classroom to ensuring my students were receiving the most effective, research-based literacy instruction. I was fortunate to begin my career in a district where I was able to attend professional development trainings and conferences, participate in peer observations, and serve on literacy curriculum committees. This emphasis on professional growth laid the foundation for the type of educator I would become.

I developed a passion for literacy when I began teaching and saw firsthand the importance of effective literacy instruction, including the impact quality literacy instruction could have on a student. The district I taught for focused on guided reading for small group instruction. My first year teaching a student who started first grade knowing only a small handful of letter sounds was in my class; she was more than one whole grade level behind. I knew her experiences in first grade would be critical to her future success in school and as her teacher, it was up to me to prepare her. I questioned every teaching move I made. I studied research articles and practitioner pieces, constantly reflecting on what was the most effective and sound approach to helping this child learn how to attach sounds to letters, how to string those sounds together to create words, and then how to connect the words in order to understand what she was reading.

My determination to serve my students' differing needs strengthened my knowledge of the guided reading framework which solidified my belief in guided reading as the most effective way to teach students how to not only read, but also understand what they were reading as well. I push back against those who say students first learn to read, then read to learn. I believe from the beginning students are learning to read and reading to learn. As students learn to read, they must also make sense of what they are reading.

I believe one of the most powerful tools teachers possess is the ability to use dialogue to promote learning. In my personal experiences as a classroom teacher, students were more eager to engage in the reading when they were able to talk about their learning. I found great joy in selecting texts I knew my students would enjoy based on their personal interests. I was intentional about developing questions about the reading in order to encourage my students to connect old understandings with new learnings.

As a classroom teacher, my classroom was rarely silent. I was often worried about how I was going to be evaluated when my principal did classroom walk-throughs because I knew my students would be talking. This is when I began to study the importance of dialogue in the classroom.

I understood early on in my career the importance of balancing effective teaching practices with student choice in order to create students who enjoyed reading and were eager to learn. I can distinctly recall one of my first professional development trainings I had to attend as a first-year teacher. I was excited when I was paired with another first-year teacher who I had completed my teacher certification with at the local university. The instructor for the professional development training asked all of the teachers to take turns answering the question: *what do you think about student choice?*

I was certain my partner and I would have the same answers since we had both gone through the same teacher certification program, with the same professors, same reading and coursework assignments, and now hired in the same school district. I was in for an unpleasant surprise when she answered the question. Her response: *I do not believe in student choice. I am the one who went to school and earned the degree so I know what my students need to learn and how they need to learn it.* This answer was shocking to me because student choice was, and continues to be, at the core of my beliefs as an educator. After talking with my partner for a few more minutes, I realized she was clearly a more teacher-centered educator and I was a student-centered educator. Taking a student-centered approach to teaching would be a position I would not be able to ignore an educator, nor as a researcher.

In staying true to social constructivist grounded theorists' approach to research, it was imperative that the position and role of the researcher was clearly considered. As an educator,

taking into account the social animals we as humans are, it would be impossible to completely separate my own personal bias and assumptions from this study. Social constructivist grounded theory's use of interviews, small groups, and observations to better understand an emerging theory means that interaction will take place. These interactions required the researcher to ask questions, listen, think, respond, ask more questions, and continue this cycle until data had been thoroughly collected. From the start of the study, until the end, my role changed from being an outsider to being more of an insider. The level of trust with some teacher-participants grew to become an important component of this study, as I was able to have more insightful and reflective conversations with these teacher-participants. They also grew more comfortable questioning my beliefs about teaching and how young children learn to read. This allowed for biases and assumptions to be more critically analyzed, which ultimately leads to more sound research findings. Including the role of the researcher in this section, is one part in maintaining reflexivity.

Methods

Sample

The participants for this study were primary grade classroom teachers with intact kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classrooms in the Southeastern United States area. The school participating in the study was a Title 1 school with almost 30 intact classrooms in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classrooms comprising of approximately 525 students. Classrooms were purposively selected based on the teacher's willingness to participate in the study. Since the purpose of the study was to potentially develop a theory of a teacher's use of dialogic discourse within guided reading, participants included classroom teachers who were willing to use dialogic discourse within the guided reading structure.

All classrooms were expected to teach using the state's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), and any other additional expectations set by their administration and School Board. Classroom teachers were read the approved consent forms, given an opportunity to ask questions, and asked to sign consent forms. Classroom teachers had the option to withdraw their classroom from participating at any time. Parents received a written explanation of the study and were asked to sign a parental consent form to allow their child to participate in the study. Student-participants who had parental consent, also signed a Minor Assent form. All individual, identifying information on students was kept confidential.

Instrumentation

The following data were collected for this study:

Pre-and Post- Semi-Structured Interviews. The pre- and post- semi-structured interviews provided evidence regarding factors which may be encouraging or hindering dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework. This datum point also allowed to better understand how shared experiences between the teacher-participants and student-participants help inform instructional practices. All five teacher-participants participated in the pre- semi-structured interviews. Four of the five teacher-participants participated in the post- semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Lesson Observations. Teacher-participants were observed teaching guided reading lessons. The researcher completed the Guided Reading Observation Tool and the Dialogic Discourse Tool while taking field notes to better analyze the interactions between the teacher-participants, the student-participants, and the text. After each observation, the researcher would meet with the teacher-participants to gain better understanding of the observed events. A sample of the rubrics with observational field notes are included in Appendix F.

Reflexive Memos. Teacher-participants and the researcher kept a written memo to be reflective and provide insights into their thinking. This allowed for teacher-participants experiences to be clearly articulated in their own words, which were analyzed and triangulated with multiple data points.

Small Group Discussions with Students. Small group discussions took place with students at the end of the study. The researcher asked the teacher-participants to select a small group of students who had permission to participate in the study to answer some questions. The researcher then asked the students four to five questions related to reading and discussing readings with their teacher. Each classroom participating in the study had a small group of students who shared. This component of the study helped to support findings from various sources of data. Questions asked during small group discussions with student-participants can be found in Appendix C.

Students' Developmental Reading Assessments. The student-participants in the study were assessed with the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2006) at the beginning and end of the study. The assessment provides a reading level, including the frustrational, instructional, and independent reading level of the student.

Variables were operationally defined and measured using the following validated tools:

1. Guided Reading was measured using the following:
 - Teacher interview
 - Guided Reading Observation Tool
 - Guided reading lesson plans
 - Field notes and memoing
 - Small group discussions with students

2. Dialogic Discourse was measured using the following:

- Teacher interview
- Dialogic Discourse Tool (Reznitskaya, A., Gline, M., & Oyler, J., 2011)
- Field notes and memoing
- Debriefing sessions
- Small group discussions with students

3. Student Reading and Comprehension Level was measured using the following:

- Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2006)

Data Collection

Social-constructivist grounded theory framed this research. Teacher-participants were asked to participate in pre- and post- semi-structured interviews in order to share their experiences of using dialogic discourse within guided reading during the study. Student-participants were engaged in small group discussions with the researcher to share their perspectives. After receiving training from the researcher on how to implement guided reading using dialogic discourse, teacher-participants were asked to begin implementing dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework. Teacher-participants developed the guided reading lesson plans on their own with researcher support and were asked to teach from the lesson plan, using appropriate scaffolding to meet the needs of their students. Teacher-participants were asked to keep anecdotal records, running records, and student work related to the guided reading lesson. The researcher observed teachers using dialogic discourse within guided reading, using a dialogic observation tool to keep record of the lessons. The researcher met with teacher-participants before, during, and after the study using a reflective process. The

researcher and the teacher-participants also kept reflective memos. All data sources were coded using the social constructivist grounded theory structure of coding, which includes: open and focused coding. Triangulation of the various data provided a more representative analysis of the teacher's experiences using dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework by examining teacher- and student-participants perceptions of guided reading, discourse, and student-centered classrooms in addition to observing and analyzing the shared experiences.

Quantitative data were also collected in an effort to provide more clarity in answering the research questions. A baseline measurement was taken on all students using the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2006). The DRA is a standardized reading assessment. The research time frame was 10 weeks with the guided reading part of the study lasting 8 weeks. At the end of the study, the DRA (Beaver, 2006) was administered again and used to evaluate change from the beginning scores.

Theoretical Sampling

This study planned for various points of data to be collected. The initial sampling of data helped establish the study. The teacher-participants pre-interviews were considered initial samples of data. As categories began to develop, theoretical sampling began which guided the direction of the study. Lesson observations, debriefing sessions, student discussion small groups, and post-interviews became more purposeful sources of data as a way to better examine emerging categories. As Charmaz (2014) pointed out, "theoretical sampling pertains only to conceptual and theoretical developments of your analysis; it is not about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability of your results" (p. 198). Ideas emerging from initial sampling shaped the questions posed during the study, the lens through which data were examined, and the comparative way in which data connected.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is a critical component in grounded theory studies. “Theoretical sensitivity is the ability to understand and define phenomena in abstract terms and to demonstrate abstract relationships between studied phenomena” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 161). The researcher must begin the study with the least amount of preconceived ideas as possible. For the purpose of this study, this involved extensive integration of the assumptions and bias the researcher brought to the study, along with clearly developing the role of the researcher. As the study continued, to ensure theoretical sensitivity was being maintained, the researcher drew upon multiple sources of data to draw connections, kept a reflexive memo to grapple with emerging theories, and used open and focused coding to focus analysis on actions. Charmaz (2014) stated, “Theorizing means stopping, pondering, and thinking afresh. We stop the flow of studied experience and take it apart. To gain theoretical sensitivity, we look at the studied life from multiple vantage points, make comparison, follow leads, and build on ideas” (p. 244). Remaining open to the different theoretical possibilities is critical to ensure data are coded through careful analysis in order to construct key categories which lay the foundation for the emerging theory. This was done with much effort in this study to ensure the emerging theory remained grounded.

Theoretical Sufficiency

Theoretical saturation is making judgments about when data has sufficiently become saturated (Charmaz, 2014). The purpose of this study, a stricter timeline was adhered to which put some restrictions on the collection of data. However, there were still copious amounts of data collected. The purpose of theoretical sampling is not in the amount of data collected, but in having enough saturation in the categories to develop theory (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) wrote that saturation occurs when “you have defined, checked, and explained relationships

between categories and the range of variation within and between your categories” (p. 213). Dey (2009) described a more appropriate term, *theoretical sufficiency* to be the determining point when enough data has been coded to suggest robust categories. Theoretical saturation may be hard to argue for this study, due to the time constraints. For that reason, the aim of data collection for this study was to have theoretical sufficiency.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to the social constructivist grounded theory framework. Unlike other research structures, which wait until all of the data has been collected to begin analyzing, the data in this social constructivist grounded theory study was examined throughout the course of the study. As the data collection began with the student DRA’s and pre-structured interviews, the data were transcribed and coded. Coding is the “process of defining what the data is about” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2013, p. 605). In social constructivist grounded theory, the codes will emerge as the data develops and is examined (Bryant & Charmaz, 2013). Through coding, “conceptual abstraction of data and its reintegration as theory takes place” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2013, p. 265). Using the steps for coding outlined by Charmaz (2014), the data went through two steps of analysis: open/initial and focused coding. It was through open coding that categories began to emerge. As the data were initially examined, concepts were labeled and categories were defined. Then, through focused coding, the data were re-examined to determine if any relationships or connections could be made among the initial coding process. Bryant and Charmaz (2013) defined this stage of coding as the time when the researcher “must be able to develop theoretical insights and abstract conceptual ideas from various sources and types of data” (p. 275).

The quantitative data, which included the students' DRA levels, had planned to be screened for normalcy and accuracy. A number of parametric and nonparametric statistical analyses were considered based on data distribution and violation of statistical assumptions. Due to the sample size, only descriptive statistics were evaluated and reported. Data were examined using between and with-in subject analyses to compare pre- and post- tests in and across each classroom, but low and differing sample sizes make implications difficult to speak to in terms of statistical power and effect size. However, the quantitative descriptive data still provided another level of insight during the data analysis process.

Constant-Comparative Analysis

Grounded theory called for constant-comparative analysis of data. Constant-comparative analysis is “the process of taking information from the data collection and comparing it to emerging categories” (Creswell, 2013, p. 86). The researcher began by comparing data points with similar data points, then as categories emerge, the researcher compared across various data points. This method is constant because the researcher constantly returns to the beginning phases of data to compare similarities and differences. This constant-comparison may or may not construct a category as the researcher analyzes the data but will strengthen the evidence in support of the emerging theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) provided a framework for the constant comparative process consisting of four stages:

1. Compare incidents applicable to each category
2. Integrate categories and their properties
3. Delimit the theory
4. Write the theory (p. 105)

Glaser (2001) wrote, “The final outcome of the constant-comparative process is a generated grounded theory with theoretical completeness. It is a theory that fits and works and is relevant in explaining how a main concern is continually resolved” (p. 190). For the purpose of this study, pre- semi-structured interview responses were coded and compared. After the pre-semi-structured interviews, lesson observations were coded and compared to not only other on-going lesson observations, but also to initial interview responses. This same process was applied to small group student discussions and post- semi-structured interview. Throughout this coding, memoing also occurred. As categories began to emerge and their properties became more defined, a core category was derived from the data. Delimiting occurred as a result of the emerging core category, as categories were reduced and theoretical satisfaction became the focus. The theory was then written, using data to ground the theory.

Generating Theory

Constructivist grounded theory, according to Charmaz (2014), “aims to create theory that has credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness” (p. 236). Grounded theory is the methodology for theory development; theory that is grounded in data (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014). Creswell (2013) made clear the distinction, “The intent of grounded theory is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory” explaining a phenomenon (p. 83). Grounded theory emphasizes theorizing over substantive areas, in an on-going active process (Charmaz, 2014). Constant-comparative method of analysis is used to associate theoretical units of a theory through data comparison, in terms of categories and their properties (Glaser, 1978). Glaser (1978) wrote, “Such conceptual comparisons result, as we have seen, in generating, densifying, and integrating the substantive theories into a formal theory by discovering a more parsimonious set of concepts with a greater scope” (p. 150). Substantive

theory occurs first, as it is open-ended as it works through the data, placing new ideas and concepts from data into a larger category. From there theory may be derived from the data. Creswell (2013) defines theory as “an explanation of something or an understanding that the researcher develops” (p. 85). For the purposes of this study, Creswell’s (2013) definition of theory provided the context for generating theory. While the study lends support to an emerging theory, more studies would need to follow to move theory over to fact.

Validation Strategies

Trustworthiness in grounded theory needs to be established from the beginning of the study and maintained throughout the entire process. Trustworthiness in grounded theory is about intentional use of accepted validation strategies in order to “document the accuracy of their studies” (Creswell, 2013, p. 250). Creswell (2013) writes about several validation strategies which were used during the course of this study. The validation strategies used in this study to maintain trustworthiness included: clarification of researcher bias, “prolonged engagement and persistent observation”, triangulation of data, and “rich thick description” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251-252). In addition to the validation strategies noted in this chapter, peer-briefing and member-checking were also used. Peer-debriefing and member-checking which were explained in Chapter I, were put in place to ensure the limitations noted in Chapter I did not weaken the study.

At the beginning of the study the researcher worked to clarify researcher bias and assumptions, which is included at the beginning of this chapter. As Creswell (2013) stated, “In this clarification, the researcher comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices and orientation that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (p. 251). The role of the researcher was articulated upon in the beginning but was also continuously considered through memo-writing and conversations with the teacher-participants.

Creswell (2013) explained how prolonged engagement and persistent observation requires the researcher to build trust with participants in order to learn more about the experiences of the participants. This includes maintaining close observation over a sufficient amount of time. For the purpose of this study, the researcher spent time interviewing each teacher-participant at the beginning and end of the study. Additionally, after each observation the researcher debriefed with the teachers to gain deeper insights and understandings into the dialogic experiences of the classroom. Observations were conducted numerous times over the course of the study.

Triangulation of data was a key strategy during the course of this study. In attempt to stay true to the methodology of grounded theory, data were analyzed at the beginning of the study. Codes were developed. As more data points were collected and coded, codes were compared. Coding then became more focused, leading to the core categories. These core categories lent support to the emerging theory. This process required data points to go through constant triangulation. When “researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity to their findings” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). This is evident in this study due to the constant-comparative method used in analysis.

Creswell (2013) described “rich thick description” as the researcher providing ample details when connecting ideas to describe a theme, which allows the reader to draw conclusions regarding the transferability of the discoveries (p. 252). Throughout the course of this study, details describing the perceptions and experiences under investigation were fully developed in a way to provide readers with a rich thick description of the evidence from which the emerging

theory was derived. This will allow readers to make decisions regarding the transferability of the emerging theory to other similar contexts.

Rigor

Glaser (1978) put forth a guideline to determining the quality of the study. The criteria for establishing if the study holds up to the expected rigorous standards include the following: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability (Glaser, 1978).

Fit. The theory must fit the data and should not be forced to fit preconceived categories (Glaser, 1978). Glaser (1978) stated, “Since most of the categories of grounded theory are generated directly from the data, the criteria of fit is automatically met and does not constitute an unsatisfactory struggle of half-fits” (p. 4). This study meets the criteria for fit because of the use of open coding and because the categories were derived directly from the data.

Work. The theory must work to “explain what happened, predict what will happen and interpret what is happening in an area of substantive or formal inquiry” (Glaser, 1978, p. 4). This study meets the criteria of work as the theory explains, predicts, and interprets what is happening during the observed experiences and interactions with participants.

Relevance. Relevance is achieved when the core concern or process emerges in a substantive area (Glaser, 1978). The use of open coding ensures relevance. Not only does the theory fit and work, it is also relevant.

Modifiability. As new data emerges, producing new categories, the theory may continually be modified (Glaser, 1978). Throughout the course of this study as data went through the constant-comparative process, new categories were created and compared to existing categories.

Summary

Using the social constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2008), this study collected various points of data in order to examine how dialogic discourse might help to develop more student-centered classrooms when strategically placed within the guided reading framework. This study included five primary classroom teachers with intact kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms in a Southeastern state in the United States. Data were analyzed using the open and focused coding process to potentially develop a theory grounded in the data.

Chapter IV. Results

Introduction

The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study was to examine the strategic use of dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework to promote student-centered classroom practices in primary grade classrooms in the Southeastern United States and to examine the perceptions of teachers and students in regards to their experiences with dialogic discourse. Additionally, based on the examinations, the purpose of the study was to potentially develop a theory of a teacher's use of dialogic discourse within guided reading to promote student-centered practices.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to examine the use of dialogic discourse during guided reading instruction:

1. How does the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading promote a more student-centered classroom?
 - a. What are the factors hindering or encouraging dialogic discourse?
2. How do the shared dialogic experiences between teacher and student help inform classroom practices?

Data Collection

This study consisted of pre- and post- semi-structured interviews with the teacher-participants, observations of the teacher- and student-participants teaching small group guided reading instruction, debriefing sessions with the teacher-participants, small group conversations with primary student-participants, and assessing all primary student-participants with the Developmental Reading Assessment. Throughout the course of the study, the researcher analyzed multiple data points to establish validity through triangulation. Charmaz (2014) argued that “simultaneous data collection and analysis can help you go further and deeper into the research problem as well as engage in developing categories” (p. 118). The developing of categories allows the researcher to define what is happening and grapple with it (Charmaz, 2014).

Pre- Semi-Structured Interviews.

The pre- semi-structured interviews took place at the beginning of the study. The interviews gave insight into the background knowledge and beliefs toward literacy instruction each of the teacher-participants had coming into the study. The teacher-participants’ own words lead to a better understanding of how they view dialogic discourse, guided reading, and student-centered practices. Additionally, each of the teacher-participants had interesting previous experiences which made each of them uniquely different from each other, while all still being new teachers at the same school. Several findings in the pre- semi-structured interviews brought about a deeper understanding of dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework to promote student-centered classrooms.

Lesson Observations.

A schedule of lesson observations was sent out to each participant at the beginning of the study. The researcher would then email the week prior to set up a day and time to come observe the teacher-participants. Due to scheduling conflicts and not all teacher-participants being actively engaged, several teacher-participants had more observations than others. There were two teacher-participants with 5 observations, one with 3 observations, one with 2 observations, and one with only 1 observation. The teacher-participant with one observation had scheduled additional observations but ended up not teaching guided reading lessons when the research came at the scheduled time. The lesson observations were the main source of data for this study. The researcher took detailed field notes while also using a guided reading fidelity rubric and dialogic discourse rubric. The researcher then met with the teacher-participants after each observation to debrief about the lesson. The rubrics were not shared with the teacher-participants but were used to help guide the debriefing sessions. The teacher-participants expressed concerns about being evaluated, so the decision was made to use the rubric as a tool for the researcher to analyze data. The major findings from the observations were constantly compared to the findings from other data sources to support the emerging theory. A sample of the rubrics with observational field notes are included in Appendix F.

Reflection Memos.

The reflection memos were an interesting component, which allowed the exact words of the teacher-participants to be analyzed and triangulated with other data points. Only two of the five teacher-participants submitted reflection memos. This aligned with other data points, in having several teacher-participants who were not actively engaged in the study. Those who did participate in the memo-writing provided insights into their thought processes.

Small Group Discussions with Students.

Small group discussions took place with students at the end of the study and provided insights into the perceptions student-participants have of their experiences with reading, discussing reading with their teacher, and how they view reading. This component of the study helped to support findings from various sources of data. Questions asked during small group discussions with student-participants can be found in Appendix C.

Students' Developmental Reading Assessments.

Students were assessed using the DRA (Beaver, 2006). The Developmental Reading Assessment assessed word accuracy in reading and comprehension. This assessment informs teachers of their students' independent, instructional, and frustrational level of reading. The independent level of reading is the level of text student can read on their own, without support or scaffolding. This includes not only being able to read the text with accuracy, but also being able to comprehend the text. The instructional level is the level in which students can successfully read the text and construct meaning, with teacher support and scaffolding. This is the level teachers should be using when conducting guided reading small group lessons. At the frustrational level, students are not able to accurately read the words or comprehend what they are reading, even with teacher support. This is different from a student reading below grade-level, grade-level, or above grade-level. When giving the DRA, a student in kindergarten at the end of the year may read a level 8 with 100% accuracy, this would be their independent level. Then, they may be reading a level 10 with 93% accuracy, which is their instructional level and a level 12 at 85%, which is their frustrational level. This kindergartener would be considered *above grade-level*. However, a first grader at the end of the year reading with those same percentages would be considered *below-grade level*. Reading levels from the DRA provided

insight into students reading below grade-level, grade-level, or above grade-level. They were assessed at the beginning of the research study and again, at the end. The purpose of the DRA was to help inform guided reading instruction and analyze results to support research findings. The DRA results helped support findings of factors which may have been encouraging or hindering dialogic discourse in order to promote student-centered classrooms. The student-participant DRA scores collected at the beginning and end of the study were reported at *below grade level*, *grade level* and *above grade level* based on the grade level expectations. Since the study began towards the beginning of the school year and students were assessed prior to the semi-structured interviews and lesson observations occurring, beginning of the year grade level expectations were used to determine *below grade level*, *grade level* and *above grade level*. The students were then assessed again at the end of the study, which took place closer to the middle of the school year. Therefore, middle of the year grade level expectations were used to determine *below grade level*, *grade level* and *above grade level*. Student DRA results are provided in the participant description section later in this chapter.

Post Semi-Structured Interviews.

The post- semi-structured interviews took place at the end of the study. The interviews gave insight into changes in background knowledge and beliefs toward literacy instruction each of the teacher-participants had throughout the course of the study. The teacher-participants' own words lead to a better understanding of how they view dialogic discourse, guided reading, and student-centered practices, and how they changed over time. Semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Coding

Open Coding

Open coding began at the beginning of the study. Charmaz (2014) wrote, “From the start, careful word-by-word, line-by-line, or incident-with-incident coding moves you toward fulfilling two criteria for completing a grounded theory analysis: fit and relevance” (p. 133). Codes are constructed as we name what we deem important or significant in the data (Charmaz, 2014). Careful construction of codes organized into categories ensures the experiences of the participants are solidified (Charmaz, 2014). The initial phases of coding began by breaking down the data, line-by-line, into codes. The first set of data collected were the pre- semi-structured interviews. These interviews were transcribed and coded using gerunds and in-vivo coding. Glaser (1978) and Charmaz (2014) both advise grounded theorists to code using gerunds to begin coding because it encourages the researcher to see processes and stick to the data. In-vivo coding involves using the participants own words and phrases to see clear patterns emerging from the data. Gerunds and in-vivo coding were both used during the process of coding.

After the initial interviews were coded, lesson observations began. Field notes from these observations were coded as an on-going process throughout the study. These observations and field notes acted to illuminate emerging findings from the semi-structured interview. At the end of the study, open coding was also done on the post- semi-structured interviews and small group discussions with student-participants. All teacher-participants were also asked to keep reflection journals throughout the study and these were also coded using in-vivo open coding. Charmaz (2014) explained, “we learn through studying our data. Initial grounded theory coding guides our learning. Through it, we begin to make sense of our data. How we make sense of it shapes the

ensuing analysis” (p. 114). Each datum point went through the initial coding process, which lead to further analysis using a focused coding process.

Memo Writing

Memo writing allowed for the researcher to intimately start integrating and grappling with the data. Memo writing began with the first collection of data that was coded, as the researcher began to write out analysis of the data. Memo writing also allowed for the researcher to interrogate any a priori codes, codes that emerged from the initial literature review, researcher reflexivity, and theoretical framework, while also grappling with posteriori codes after data was collected. For the purposes of this study, the researcher kept a memo, which was in essence the first draft of the findings. Questions about the data, connections between points of data, and epistemological stances were included in the memoing. This served to build a deeper understanding of the data and make sense of how the data told the unique story in support of the emerging theory.

Focused Coding

Once initial codes began to identify patterns, a more focused approach took place. During this focused coding the researcher analyzes the initial codes to determine overarching categories. From there, the researcher seeks to determine if a core variable exists, connecting the main categories. This core category supports the emerging theory. Charmaz (2014) explained, “Focused coding means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through and analyze large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely. It also can involve coding your initial codes” (p. 138). The active process of focused coding during this research study strengthened the constant-comparative process to ground the data and fully

develop the main categories. During focused coding, focus was placed on the initial codes which seemed to have the most analytic power, leading to more robust and solid categories. The Coding Guide along with excerpts of the codebook can be found in Appendix A.

Description of Participants and Their Views on Discourse

At the time of this study, all teacher-participants and student-participants attended the primary school in the Southeastern part of the United States. All teacher-participants had been teaching for at least two or more years but were new teachers at the school. Each teacher-participant had a unique background and various levels of teaching experience. Background information provided insight into the experiences of the participants. Included here are also participants own words taken from semi-structured interviews and small group discussions during the study to better understand participants perspectives.

Teacher A, Mrs. Nicks

Mrs. Nicks had recently moved to the area but had taught another primary grade for three years previously in another state. Her educational background included a Bachelor's degree in Historical Preservation and Elementary Education and a Master's in Elementary Education. Her previous school district implemented Fountas and Pinnell (1996) guided reading practices and the Reader's Workshop approach. She was familiar with the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2006) and had used it in her previous district. When asked why she became a teacher, Mrs. Nicks, stated, *"I always loved helping students and guiding them. I took some classes in high school, there was a teacher cadet program we could take and I took that and I really was interested in it. So, when I got to college I took some classes and just fell in love with teaching and helping students."* She also shared that both her mother and father were teachers. Mrs. Nicks expressed strong views on discourse in the classroom:

“I think it’s super important throughout the whole day to talk about it [learning]. Um, because they need to, they need to talk. It’s like they can talk to their friends about what they’re learning or what they’re excited about and then they can talk to me about, but it’s constantly throughout the day.”

“There’s no talking, there’s no learning. There’s a difference. There’s, there’s learning talking and then there is talking to chat. That’s talking about the weekend, what they’re eating for lunch. I mean, I model that in the beginning of the year, like I want to, we modeled like at stations. It’s ok if we talk, but we’re talking about helping each other. We’re talking about math, talk about reading, and we talked about what kind of math talk there is, reading talk, and we’re not talking about our weekend or what we’re eating for lunch- that’s recess talk.”

Teacher B, Mrs. Carpenter

Mrs. Carpenter is a primary teacher who was teaching in public schools in the United States for the first time. She taught in other countries such as Japan and United Arab Emirates before teaching in a private school in the United States. She had been teaching for nine years at the time of the study. Her educational background included a Bachelor’s degree in Spanish and International Studies and a Master’s degree in Higher Administration. She then obtained her teaching certificate through an online program at a University in the Southern United States. While the guided reading framework was new to her, she had implemented small group instruction and literacy stations in her instructional practices. She expressed that while she did “*fall into teaching*”, she enjoys teaching, “*I just enjoy it. I enjoy being around kids.*” When asked about the types of dialogue Mrs. Carpenter has with her students during literacy instruction, she stated:

“I try to be positive and encouraging towards them. Um, but I also, I want them to figure things out for themselves. So as like for instance, one of them was reading a book that was too hard for them this morning and it was, they did on one level, so I moved them up and it’s not there yet, right? Um, and they would just get two words and completely skip over them and I would say, well let’s go back and look at that word. You can figure out what the beginning sounds of that word is and can we look at the picture and use that picture to help us. So, I like to think a lot of my dialogue is sort of guiding them and sort of not telling them the answers but leading them in the correct direction to figure it out for themselves.”

Teacher C, Mrs. Owens

Mrs. Owens had both an undergraduate and graduate degree in Early Childhood Education and had been teaching for 3 years. She had previously taught in another school district close to the school of the study for 2 years and was in her first year at the current school. Mrs. Owens seemed to have a desire to be change-agent, hoping to create life-long learners in her students. She became a teacher because,

“I love teaching. I knew I wanted to be a teacher since I was two years old. I’ve been teaching my whole life. I taught my little cousins how to read and it’s just that satisfaction that you’re making a difference in that child and just, I want them to have a positive outlook on school and I completely believe that school or education is the way to change the future and it can change their past. So, your environment that you come from, it, kinda, it impacts your learning and your outlook on school and I feel that being a low-grade teacher, a kindergarten or

first grade, it's their first, um, view of school and if you create that positive disposition towards school, they're going to continue that throughout their lives."

Mrs. Owens expressed the following about discourse in the classroom, explaining how she wants her students to make real-world connections through dialogue in her classroom:

"My classroom is not one that's quiet. I have a chatty class. So, I want them to be able to talk about what they're doing and talk about what they're learning about. And this goes for literacy workshop and math workshop, I want them to be talking about what they're doing, like connecting it to real world experiences, connecting it to a different book so they're constantly doing that text-to-text connection. And I feel that, that just enhances their learning and we have a lot of teachers in here that I told them are a teacher just like I'm a teacher. You can teach your friend, you can teach your brother, sister. So, they are constantly teaching and they feel that, that I feel that, that gives them a sense of confidence and it just gets them to dig deeper because they're actually sharing what they're learning about."

Teacher D, Mrs. Bruce

Mrs. Bruce was in her second year of teaching. She had previously taught an intermediate grade in another town in the Southeastern United States. This was her second year of teaching and her first year teaching in a primary grade. Due to lack of knowledge of young readers, she felt very unsure of teaching guided reading and using discourse to promote student-centered classrooms. However, she seemed eager to learn and grow as an educator. She expressed a sincere and genuine passion for teaching, stating:

"Because I've always enjoyed watching children craft a concept. Like it is amazing for me to see, like even with my babies, how they came in in the

beginning and they were like just scared and timid, but over time I watched them get all this growth and confidence and you know, now telling me stuff and even expanding upon that and teaching me some stuff too. So, um, I dunno, I guess for the love and just knowing that what I'm telling them they're learning and their grasping and being able to just see that come to life in front of me was amazing.”

When discussing discourse within her classroom, Mrs. Bruce expressed trying to take a more observant approach in her classroom. She explained how she prefers to sit back and observe her students engaging in conversations with each other instead of her “*telling them what to do all the time*”.

Teacher E, Mrs. Greene

Mrs. Greene was currently in her third year of teaching at the time of the study. She had previously taught in two other states prior to begin her third year of teaching at the school participating in this research study. She expressed this current year being like her third, first of teaching because of teaching in different schools in different states each year. She had little knowledge of guided reading or small group instruction. She also took a more teacher-directed stance to her classroom instruction. When asked why she became a teacher, Mrs. Greene said:

“I'm mostly just, I enjoy working with kids every day. I would say being able to see the growth and the learning experience that they gained throughout the year, especially towards the end, you get to really see what you taught them and also the love that they have for you. So, I just really enjoyed it.”

When asked about the types of discourse taking place in her classroom, Mrs. Greene expressed the following about conversations during small group instruction:

“So, in small group I just kind of do an overview, a scan, if you will, of exactly what we're looking at. What we're going to be talking about, what we're going to be doing, um, and then as we go through that, allow them to kind of have conversation with me and say, okay, well what did you think about this? Or tell me about this or I'm just kind of review and make sure they're comprehending whether reading makes sense.”

When asked how often dialogue around learning takes place in her classroom, TE stated:

“We talk all the time, but I would say maybe five or six times. I mean, when we discuss things all the time. I mean, it just depends on what we've got going on. I would say four or I would say five or six at the most. It, like I said, it just depends on how crazy the day is and what we have going on. So, yeah.”

The data in table I provides an overview of the description of each participant.

Table I.

Description of the Teacher-Participants

Participant Codes	Gender	Ethnicity	Years Teaching	Level of Education
Mrs. Nicks	F	Caucasian	4	Masters
Mrs. Carpenter	F	Caucasian	9	Masters
Mrs. Owens	F	Caucasian	3	Masters
Mrs. Bruce	F	African American	2	Bachelors
Mrs. Greene	F	Caucasian	3	Bachelors

Student-Participants

Primary students in kindergarten, first, and second grade intact-classrooms were vital to this study. Only students with signed parental-consent and minor-assent participated in the study.

Teacher-participant, Mrs. Nicks, had 14 student-participants in her classroom, with 5 boys and 9 girls participating. Teacher-participant Mrs. Carpenter had the most participants, which included 15 student-participants in her classroom, with 7 boys and 8 girls participating. Teacher-participant, Mrs. Owens, had 12 student-participants, with 5 boys and 7 girls participating. Teacher-participant Mrs. Bruce also had 12 student-participants, with 6 boys and 6 girls participating. Teacher-participants Mrs. Greene had the least number of student-participants with 6 boys and 3 girls, equally 9 total student-participants. Table II provides an overview of the number of student-participants in each of the teacher-participants classes, along with gender descriptors.

Table II.

Number of Student-Participants in Each Teacher-Participants' Classroom

Teacher-Participant Codes	Student-Participants	Boy Students	Girl Students
Mrs. Nicks	14	5	9
Mrs. Carpenter	15	7	8
Mrs. Owens	12	5	7
Mrs. Bruce	12	6	6
Mrs. Greene	9	6	3

Each student-participant was assessed using the DRA prior to lesson observations beginning and then again at the end before final teacher-participant semi-structured interviews. The DRA levels help to provide a deeper understanding of the students reading abilities, the over-all reading abilities of the class, and how reading levels changed over time during the course of the study.

At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Nicks' class had 2 student-participants, 14.3%, reading below grade level, 1 student-participant, 7.1%, reading at grade level, and 11 student-participants, 78.6%, were reading above grade level. At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Carpenter's class had 2 student-participants, 13.3%, reading below grade level, 2 student-participants, 13.3%, reading at grade level, and 11 student-participants, 73.3%, were reading above grade level. At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Owens' class had 2 student-participants, 16.7%, reading below grade level, 1 student-participant, 8.3%, reading at grade level, and 9 student-participants, 75%, were reading above grade level. At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Owens' class had 2 student-participants, 16.7%, reading below grade level, 2 student-participants, 16.7%, reading at grade level, and 8 student-participants, 66.7%, were reading above grade level. At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Greene's class had 2 student-participants, 22.2%, reading below grade level, 3 student-participants, 33.3%, reading at grade level, and 4 student-participants, 44.4%, were reading above grade level.

Mrs. Carpenter, with the highest number of student-participants, (n=15), had the lowest percentage of students reading below grade-level, (n=2, 13.3%), while Mrs. Greene, with the lowest number of student-participants, (n=9), had the highest percentage of students reading below grade-level, (n=2, 22.2%). Mrs. Greene had the highest amount and percentage of students reading at grade level, (n=3, 33.3%). Mrs. Nicks had the lowest percentage of students reading at grade level, (n=1, 07.1%). Mrs. Nicks had the highest percentage of student-participants reading above grade-level, (n=14, 78.6%), while Mrs. Greene had the lowest number of student-participants reading above grade level, (n=4, 44.4%). The data in table III provides an overview the student-participants DRA Scores at the beginning of the study.

Table III.

Student-Participants' DRA Scores, Beginning of Study

Teacher-Participants	Below Grade Level	Grade Level	Above Grade Level	Total Student-Participants
Mrs. Nicks	n=2 (14.3%)	n=1 (07.1%)	n=11(78.6%)	14
Mrs. Carpenter	n=2 (13.3%)	n=2 (13.3%)	n=11(73.3%)	15
Mrs. Owens	n=2 (16.7%)	n=1 (08.3%)	n=9 (75.0%)	12
Mrs. Bruce	n=2 (16.7%)	n=2 (16.7%)	n=8 (66.7%)	12
Mrs. Greene	n=2 (22.2%)	n=3 (33.3%)	n=4 (44.4%)	9

At the end of the study, Mrs. Nicks' class had 1 student-participant, 7.1%, reading below grade level, 1 student-participant, 7.1%, reading at grade level, and 12 student-participants, 85.7%, were reading above grade level. At the end of the study, Mrs. Carpenter's class had 0 student-participants, 0%, reading below grade level, 2 student-participants, 13.3%, reading at grade level, and 13 student-participants, 86.7%, were reading above grade level. At the end of the study, Mrs. Owens' class had 1 student-participant, 8.3%, reading below grade level, 3 student-participants, 25.0%, reading at grade level, and 8 student-participants, 66.7%, were reading above grade level. At the end of the study, Mrs. Bruce's class had 3 student-participants, 25.0%, reading below grade level, 1 student-participant, 8.3%, reading at grade level, and 8 student-participants, 66.7%, were reading above grade level. At the end of the study, Mrs. Greene's class had 1 student-participant, 11.1%, reading below grade level, 1 student-participant, 11.1%, reading at grade level, and 7 student-participants, 77.8%, were reading above grade level.

Mrs. Carpenter, with the highest number of student-participants, (n=15), had the lowest percentage of students reading below grade-level, (n=0, 0.00%), while Mrs. Bruce, who had 12

student-participants, had the highest percentage of students reading below grade-level, (n=3, 25.0%). Mrs. Owens had the highest percentage of student-participants reading at grade-level, (n=3, 25%). Mrs. Nicks had the lowest percentage of student-participants reading at grade-level, (n=1, 07.1%). Mrs. Carpenter had the highest percentage of student-participants reading above grade-level, (n=13, 86.76%), while Mrs. Owens and Mrs. Bruce both had the lowest number of student-participants reading above grade level, (n=8, 66.7%). The data in table IV provides an overview the student-participants DRA Scores at the end of the study.

Table IV.

Student-Participants' DRA Scores, End of Study

Teacher-Participants	Below Grade Level	Grade Level	Above Grade Level	Total Student-Participants
Mrs. Nicks	n=1 (07.1%)	n=1 (07.1%)	n=12 (85.7%)	14
Mrs. Carpenter	n=0 (00.0%)	n=2 (13.3%)	n=13 (86.7%)	15
Mrs. Owens	n=1 (08.3%)	n=3 (25.0%)	n=8 (66.7%)	12
Mrs. Bruce	n=3 (25.0%)	n=1 (08.3%)	n=8 (66.7%)	12
Mrs. Greene	n=1 (11.1%)	n=1 (11.1%)	n=7 (77.8%)	9

Small group discussions provided some insight into the perceptions and experiences of the primary students. Most students could name a favorite book and articulate if they enjoyed reading. Several students identified themselves as readers. The following are some of the views expressed by primary students participating in the study:

Student: I like when she [the teacher] reads the books to us and then at the end she just asks questions...she like asks about the story, about the book and what did they do that.

Student: I think it's fun because you get to read all these words and the story too.

Student: I'm a reader, so I help other people with words.

Student: I like it, I, I read things because I mostly read nonfiction books and I like learning new things. At first, the book, the book doesn't look like it will be good, but since it's a nonfiction book and once we start reading it and get more into it, it starts to get more interesting.

Student: We have a lot of conversations. Sometimes we look for the main idea and we have 3 main details. We describe the idea. We talk about what the story is mostly about the main characters, all that. We talk about the facts that it's told and we talk. We talk about the facts so we can remember the facts.

Research Question Number One

The first research question was looking to gain a better understanding of how dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework promotes a more student-centered classroom. The data were analyzed to determine possible factors that might be hindering or encouraging dialogue. The major categories supported by various data points were the participants' active engagement in the study, pressures and influences from administration, lack of knowledge of the guided reading framework which led to misconceptions and less-effective practices, and strong beliefs in how students learn. For those teacher-participants who actively engaged in the study, their intentional moves to incorporate dialogic discourse resulted in additional interesting outcomes. These included creating opportunities for students to articulate their thinking in various settings using consistent language to promote transfer of knowledge and using questioning to promote more student-centered classroom practices.

Engagement in Study

Three of the teacher-participants seemed eager and wanted to be involved with the study. They were asking questions and determined to try new things. Teacher-participants Mrs. Nicks, Mrs. Carpenter, and Mrs. Bruce all attended the professional development on guided reading and actively participated in the training. All teacher-participants participated in the semi-structured interviews at the beginning of the study. For lesson observations and debriefing sessions, teacher-participants Mrs. Nicks and Mrs. Carpenter participated in 5 sessions, Mrs. Owens participated in 3, Mrs. Bruce participated in 2, and Mrs. Greene, technically participated in 1 session. Mrs. Greene had scheduled two other observations but did not end up teaching a guided reading lesson during the scheduled time. One teacher-participant, Mrs. Bruce seemed to be interested, but was less engaged, while another, Mrs. Greene, was incredibly reluctant. She forgot about the first scheduled interview, arriving 10 minutes late. All but teacher-participant, Mrs. Bruce, participated in the post-semi structured interview. Only teacher-participants Mrs. Nicks and Mrs. Carpenter submitted a reflection memo. Depending on the level of engagement in the study, discourse may have been hindered or encouraged, as their level of comfort, understanding of, and application of dialogic discourse connected to their level of participation. Table V provides an overview of the teacher-participants participation in the study.

Table V.

Teacher-Participants Participation in Study

Participant Codes	Pre-Semi Structured Interview	Number of Observations	Post-Semi Structured Interview	Reflection Memo
Mrs. Nicks	Yes	5	Yes	Yes
Mrs. Carpenter	Yes	5	Yes	Yes
Mrs. Owens	Yes	3	Yes	No
Mrs. Bruce	Yes	2	No	No
Mrs. Greene	Yes-Late	1	Yes	No

Perceived Pressures and Expectations from Administration

Each teacher-participant expressed that the expectation from administration was guided reading was supposed to be implemented in their classrooms. The principal of the school had given each teacher a copy of *The Next Steps in Guided Reading* By Jan Richardson (2009), with the expectation teachers use the book as the framework for their guided reading instruction.

Mrs. Nicks: Our principal insisted we focus on Jan Richardson and to following her guidelines...

Mrs. Owens: I know I am supposed to do guided reading...

Mrs. Owens: We use the Jan Richardson book and I'm just basing our instruction on the templates that are in the book, if that makes sense.

While this professional reading is a fantastic resource for teachers and guided reading is an effective framework for small group guided practice instruction (Clay, 1985; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), lack of knowledge around how to properly implement guided reading was causing frustration and distrust with the guided reading framework. When asked about any professional development or training they had received, all teacher-participants stated they had received no

additional support from their current school. They were given the book and told they needed to implement guided reading in their classrooms.

It was impressive how each teacher felt they had authority to select curriculum they felt was best suited for their students. Each stated they have a range of materials and resources they can pull from.

Mrs. Carpenter: They just told us to teach them to read.

This is not something commonly heard in this area, where scripted curriculums seem to dominate. However, since many of the teachers were new and felt unsure of guided reading, they had not really expanded their resources. Mrs. Nicks expressed this in her pre-interview.

Mrs. Nicks: So right now, since I'm still learning everything at this school, um, I know that they do a literacy program right now. I've been using a lot more of Reading A to Z stories, um, because they are leveled so, and we also have a book room that we can pull books from, but I know, um, our principal insisted we focus on Jan Richardson and to following her guidelines, but, and then I've been pulling books from either the book room or guided reading.

Once thing expressed repeatedly throughout the study was the pressure the teachers felt in when and how they conducted their small groups and assessments. Because of the way administration required assessments to be administered, the teachers felt their instruction was constantly being disrupted. In each of the debriefing sessions, teacher-participants expressed concerns over procedures for assessing students. Teachers were required to give each student a Running Record reading assessment every 2 weeks. The teachers were stopping instruction to assess each student, simply to have a Running Record to turn in to administration.

Mrs. Carpenter: We have to have our Running Records up-to-date soon...I think right now I feel spread thin with the amount of data that they want. So, I feel like I'm neglecting a lot of my students needs because they need the running records on paper.

Mrs. Carpenter: Um, the running records they told us that we needed to keep reading records. That was all they told us. They didn't tell us what books or what method, anything about it. And so, um, when they first, I tried to start on my own just early in the year, but kids couldn't read past the A level. So, I thought there's no point in doing this if they don't recognize anything. But then they told us at the next week's meeting we need to have our running records, have them all done and tally it up for each kid. So, I went through and I did it and had everybody's, um, and they wanted us to use that to break them into groups and I loosely did that because I know that some kids can read higher than that, that it was that particular book or that particular day. Um, and then we've been told for another meeting coming up, we need our updated running records, so therefore everything else is getting pushed to the side. So, I have time to take running records on the kids. Yeah, that's sort of how I feel about that. Yeah.

This expectation is counter-productive to managing small group guided reading instruction. Additionally, since each teacher-participant had misconceptions about guided reading, the pressures and expectations from administration created an environment where guided reading was not openly accepted or welcomed. This hindered discourse as the environment made it difficult to ignite change in some teacher-participants.

Understanding of Guided Reading

Teacher-participants seemed to misunderstand what guided reading is and what it is not. During each of the semi-structured interviews and debriefing sessions, guided reading was discussed. Teacher-participants were asked to describe the literacy instruction taking place in their classrooms. While some of the teacher-participants said they do guided reading, none of the teacher-participants were able to actually articulate the guided reading framework. Teacher-participant, Mrs. Nicks, had the best grasp on guided reading but struggled to implement it with fidelity in the current school setting. Her knowledge of guided reading and most of her experiences came from her previous school system, where she was able to take a professional development course in guided reading.

Mrs. Nicks: I also took a spot class which was based off guided reading for your specific grade level you're teaching. So, I taught second, so I, um, it was about a few months and you went about once a month to this class and they taught you how to properly do guided reading.

What is interesting about this, is the emphasis placed on grade level versus understanding where her students are at developmentally in their reading, and while Mrs. Nicks was excited about her new school and grade level, she identified needing to learn more about guided reading.

Mrs. Nicks: So, this my first year teaching kindergarten, so I'm very excited to learn. I learned a lot about second grade and I'm wanting to learn more about kindergarten for guided reading. So, I started watching the Jan Richardson videos online just to kind of get myself familiar with kindergarten guided reading. Um, but I know it's just like the, I typically do a mini lesson and then we do our station rotations with guided reading at my table. So, but I'm right now all my

groups are differentiated, my stations are differentiated and then when they come to me it's that group that whatever level I grouped in that they come to me and we focus on whatever they need help with that specific group.

Mrs. Nicks: It's my first time in kindergarten and I know it can be hard for them to be independent at stations but again, I think it's choosing those right stations for them. But I strongly believe in guided reading that small groups time is so important and you're going to reach those kids more than if you did only whole group because when you do whole group you think everyone's got it. But then when you bring them into small group, you realize that's where you can really attack it and get them whatever level need, the level that they need to be on.

However, she expressed feeling as though she lacked some confidence being in a new school and grade level.

Mrs. Nicks: So, I felt, I feel like I've gained a lot of confidence because I was always a math person. So, literacy are always made me nervous when teaching and especially, um, but I think after taking, especially back in my previous school, taking that spot class for you specifically for that grade level really boost my confidence because I knew exactly what I need to do. It's very like it told you very specific what you needed to do. And I felt that it was helpful too because I did see growth in my kids and it also kept it very, like organized and the kids were organized and we just had a system with everything. So here, since I'm still learning command garden, I'm, I feel like I'm back onto like alert. My confidence is kind of lower just because I need to learn in kindergarten more.

Observing Mrs. Nicks during guided reading lessons, it was clear she had knowledge of the guided reading framework, as attempts were made during each lesson to include the key components. She was most consistent in including key components and making attempts to connect with text. However, there was still a disconnect between fully implementing guided reading with fidelity according to students' reading levels and working on isolated skill instruction during her small group time.

When speaking with each teacher-participant much focus was placed on teaching phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Many expressed working on letter identification and decoding in small group, claiming to be implementing guided reading. However, pulling in a connective text and emphasis on constructing meaning was missing. Teaching isolated skill instruction was something seen in almost every observation, although some teacher-participants did try to connect students with text more throughout the course of the study. Teacher-participant, Mrs. Nicks and Mrs. Carpenter did work to bring more text to the guided reading sessions and expressed this being more engaging for the students.

Mrs. Nicks: When I brought in books the first day rather than like, the second or third day, they are more engaged and I was able to tie in more of the sight words and phonics skills with the books, was more purposeful instead of just talking about it. So, yeah, I'm bringing in the books earlier in the week rather than later, was helpful.

Another participant expressed still trying to better understand guided reading and not being able to fully implement the guided reading framework into the daily schedule. She had been using the professional reading text provided by her principal to glean ideas.

Mrs. Carpenter: And um, so I've been using this to sort of get ideas to guide my group work and like I said, I don't get to groups a lot but I have gotten one or two a week and we'll, we don't quite go this in depth just because I feel like I don't have quite that much time with them but we. We'd go over sight words. We will you pick their one of their letters that they're working on and work through that in different ways to sound out words. And then if, if I have time I'll try to get to some of these um, different like what are, they call it, different reading strategies just so, but it just, I base it on time.

Based on what was shared in the interview, it appears the way guided reading is being brought into the classrooms, might be driving some of the confusion. Teacher-participants felt they had to say they had each of their students in guided reading groups, even if they felt their students were not ready for guided reading.

Mrs. Owens: ...for guided reading, like I feel that I understand the concepts of putting a book in front of them and stuff like that, but the students that are not ready for like running records and stuff like that, I feel that it's more important to teach them concepts of print and get them to love learning and love reading rather than put a book in front of them and tell them to read it.

Guided reading seemed to be a dark cloud for some, who felt it brought frustration and stress to the students, and them as teachers.

Mrs. Owens: I feel that we push it on them a lot and um, rather than them just using their natural inquisitive spirits to explore the letters around them. Like I feel that when we're constantly pushing it on them, we're kind of getting this mindset that it's not fun that they necessarily want to learn and I don't like that. I want

them to want to learn it just as much as I wanted to teach them to learn it. So, I try to teach like a love for learning and a love for letters and sounds and books and stuff like that before I really go into guided reading and I feel that if they don't have that initial love, that what we're teaching is not going to be as beneficial for them in the long run.

In the beginning of the study, teacher-participant, Mrs. Bruce, seemed open to better understanding the guided reading framework, implementing components she had not previously done with students in the past. Mrs. Bruce had expressed a lack of knowledge regarding guided reading and using dialogic discourse to promote a deeper understanding of text, while also encouraging more student-centered practices.

Mrs. Bruce: I don't necessarily know all the steps to guided reading, but I feel like my love for reading, it's really starting to rub off on them. So, I feel like, you know, being able to model how much I enjoy working with words and just working with anything involving books and reading.

Mrs. Bruce placed an important emphasis on building students' vocabulary and she was intentional about implementing this within her guided reading lessons.

Teacher-participant, Mrs. Greene had the least amount of working knowledge in guided reading and seemed to struggle the most with small group instruction. When discussing her small group instruction, it was mostly surface level activities and lacked any substantive teaching. She used printed reading passages instead of authentic texts and did not elaborate or expand on the basic, ready-made questions provided with the reading passages.

Mrs. Greene: I have a folder, um, and then I have 'em or, they'll come and see me, um, where we read passages that are on their level. So, um, for example, I

have passages, where they, um, it's the same passage but they're grouped off as like not as many words or maybe more words or what, whichever. And then the questions are still the same. They're kind of broken down a little easier depending on your reading level. Um, so they bring 3 crayons with them and pretty much with the crayons after we read, then go back through and we highlight with the coloring crayons or underline, so that way they can match it with the question to help them answer.

Teacher-participants understanding of guided reading may have hindered or encouraged dialogue as there were some who lacked knowledge but were willing to learn, while others lacked knowledge and were not as engaged in the study.

Missed Opportunities and Ineffective Strategies

There were also missed opportunities, which hindered dialogue. These missed opportunities were present in almost every lesson observed. At the beginning of the observations, teacher-participants were reluctant to hand students books, which often stifled opportunities for dialogue. During debriefing sessions, teacher-participants expressed certain skills, such as phonemic awareness, needing more focus than others, which often meant there was not time for reading the text and having discussion around the text. This meant missed opportunities for students to engage in reading and use dialogic discourse.

There were multiple times during lessons when teacher-participant, Mrs. Carpenter, engaged in questioning discourse with her students. She flowed between lower-level and higher-level questions depending on how students were responding. However, students never expanded on the conversation or took control of the dialogue.

Mrs. Carpenter: Do not jump in the mud....who told him that?

S1: Mom!

Mrs. Carpenter: Do you think he'll listen?

S2: No.

Mrs. Carpenter: What if it was his teacher?

S1: Yes!

This discourse around the text could have been expanded by having students provide evidence for their answers. When asked, *Do you think he'll listen?*, Mrs. Carpenter could have expanded the conversation by asking the students *why* they answered the question the way they did. Students who answered differently from each other could debate their reasoning, taking more control of the discourse. This same idea could have also been applied to the question, *what if it was his teacher?*

Teacher-participant, Mrs. Owens, was one who consistently handed the book to the students during small group instruction. She attempted to facilitate conversation but her questions were usually lower level thinking questions and occurred at the beginning of the reading to engage students in the text. She acknowledged focusing more on concepts about print before supporting students' reading comprehension and taking a more teacher-centered approach.

Mrs. Owens: At the beginning it just depends on what group we're talking about, at the beginning for the reading I would just read and then I would get them to try to point to each word. And then that conversation is more just listening comprehension, whereas my higher group, it was more talking about like reading strategies and this is the way that we could figure out how to do this or this is the

way that we could sound this word out. And I think that type of conversation was different and it will change as we continue just because, you know, once they get that concepts of print down, it can go into deeper thinking about the different story aspects and stuff like that. But right now, I feel like I'm being so explicit, but it's just. And I know it takes time. I do, I know that it takes time. It's just hard.

She often missed opportunities to engage in dialogue during and after the reading in a way that required students to think beyond the surface. Additionally, during the reading, she had her students participate in choral reading, where all the students read the text together. The use of this ineffective strategy meant the teacher was never able to strategically prompt students at point of difficulty or engage students in dialogue to problem-solve or create a deeper meaning because individual reading behaviors are not able to be observed during choral reading. This created many missed opportunities.

While reading a book about the life cycle of an apple, teacher-participant, Mrs. Bruce, missed an opportunity to fully connect previous learning with the new knowledge students were struggling with in the current text and use dialogue to further support student learning. Students struggled with recalling the cycle of the apple as described in the book, even after the teacher made one attempt to remind students about the cycle of the pumpkin, which they had previously learned about. At the end of the text, the students were given the task of drawing the apple life cycle with little discussion around what they had just read.

Mrs. Bruce: Let's talk about the apple tree cycle. What happened at the beginning?

S1: They planted a seed.

Mrs. Bruce: You are going to draw the apple cycle.

Students were then given paper to draw the apple cycle.

This would have been a great opportunity to connect previous learning about the pumpkin cycle with what they had just read, along with furthering their understanding of life cycles. They could have further expanded this by talking about other types of life cycles and how this impacts them as humans.

One teacher-participant, Mrs. Greene had students read aloud, one-at-time, then had the students complete a worksheet. At the beginning of the lesson, Mrs. Greene simply had the students answer questions on the reading passage. This was a missed opportunity to engage students in dialogue around the reading. Discourse connecting background knowledge, making predictions, and setting the purpose for reading would have expanded student learning. During the readings, if a student came to unknown word, Mrs. Greene would simply tell the student the word, without ever scaffolding the reading to provide opportunities for the students to attempt to determine the word on their own or gain any meaning to the word in relation to the meaning of the text. Students were never engaged in any problem-solving or critical thinking during point of difficulty. After the reading, Mrs. Greene left the students at the table to complete the task. While the students engaged in dialogue with each other, such as sharing possible answering to the question on the worksheet, Mrs. Greene was not present. When Mrs. Greene returned to the table, she did a quick check to make sure the students completed the worksheet correctly, with little open dialogue occurring. There were many opportunities for dialogic discourse to promote student-centered practices, but they were repeatedly missed. When discussing the lesson with Mrs. Greene, she expressed how much she enjoyed the curriculum because the questions and reading passage were already prepared.

Intentional Use of Language as a Dialogic Tool

A particular interesting observation of the study was the teacher-participant, Mrs. Nicks, who took a more dialogic approach during the word study portion of the lessons. While Mrs. Nicks taught typical phonological awareness and phonics lessons but would take the lessons a step further by requiring the students to articulate their thinking.

Mrs. Nicks would hand the students a prepared set of letters for the students to build words. Mrs. Nicks would begin by having the students build a word. She would then have the students say the word, then ask the students to build a new word. The new word would contain the word family pattern of the first word. Students would look through their letters set and try to build the new word. However, instead of simply telling the students if they built the word correctly or not, Mrs. Nicks, would question the students. In one lesson, Mrs. Nicks began with phonological awareness activities. Mrs. Nicks gave each student a small, specific set of letters.

Mrs. Nicks: Please build the word, pan.

Students build the word, pan, using the letter p, a, and n.

Mrs. Nicks: Let's slide our finger under the word and say the word.

Students slide finger and say pan.

Mrs. Nicks: Now build the word, tan.

Students moved the p and added a t.

Mrs. Nicks: Let's slide our finger under the word and say the word.

Students slide finger and say tan.

Mrs. Nicks: Pan to tan...what changes?

S: p and the t

Mrs. Nicks: Why?

S: Because /t/ is a t.

Mrs. Nicks' intentional use of dialogue required the students to put their thinking on display. The students had to think critically about why they took the actions they took and articulate this back to their teacher. During another lesson, this same instructional strategy was used. Again, Mrs. Nicks gave the students a small, specific set of letters.

Mrs. Nicks: Please build the word, cat.

Students build the word, cat, using the letter c, a, and t.

Mrs. Nicks: Let's slide our finger under the word and say the word.

Students slide finger and say cat.

Mrs. Nicks: Now build the word, bat.

Students moved the c and added a b.

Mrs. Nicks: Let's slide our finger under the word and say the word.

Students slide finger and say cat.

Mrs. Nicks: Why did you move the c and add a b?

S: Because /b/-at starts with /b/.

Mrs. Nicks: Now build the word, sat.

Students moved the b and added a s.

Mrs. Nicks: Let's slide our finger under the word and say the word.

Students slide finger and say sat.

Mrs. Nicks: Why did you move the b and add a s?

S: Because /s/ is an s and /s/-at is an s.

This particular teacher initially spent the majority of the lesson on phonological awareness and phonics activities. However, when she made the shift to taking a more balanced

approach to her small group instruction, the language she was using during the beginning of the lessons transferred to discussion around text. Mrs. Nicks intentionally used the same language during the word study portion, which she would then use during the comprehension building session of the lesson.

Mrs. Nicks: We are meeting in our small groups, we talk more about the books and we talk more about the why's and how's of like, we don't just say, 'oh, this is the word, cat'. We'll talk more about why is that cat and not hat and then so, and I noticed them discussing it with each other or on their own. They'll come and talk to me about it and be like Mrs. [Nicks], I know this is the word fan because, and not van, because it starts with the sound /f/. So, they are realizing because we talked about it more, about the why's and the how's like with the letters we see and in making sense of it all. So, there has been more like conversation about that which is good."

While reading the text, and after, Mrs. Nicks would ask similar questions as the questions asked during the phonemic awareness and phonics portion of the lesson. Mrs. Nicks listens to the reader independently and works with them at point-of-difficulty being intentional with her language choices.

Asks students to whisper reads...

Student appeals to teacher, not attending to print, guessing word.

Mrs. Nicks prompts student to point.

S: My dog jump.

Teacher prompts student to point.

S: My dog can jump.

S: My dog can jump.... Run.

Mrs. Nicks: How did you fix it yourself?

S: I noticed it started w/ an "r" .../r/.

S: My dog can....

Mrs. Nicks prompts with nonverbal hand motions...

Looked at sounds...

Mrs. Nicks: /d/ /i/ /g/.

Student wasn't sure what dig meant, Mrs. Nicks explained...

Mrs. Nicks: dig means to remove, take the dirt out of the ground...

She also had student articulate their thinking when they finished reading the text.

Mrs. Nicks: Look at the pictures, what are they doing?

S1: This little gal is swinging.

S2: This guy is....what is this???

S1: That is a skateboard!

Mrs. Nicks: What do you do on a skateboard?

S2: You stand on it and move.

Mrs. Nicks: Let's look at word and picture.... It's not skate, why?

S2: It doesn't start with /sk/

This continuity allowed the students to discuss their thinking because they were already familiar with the types of questions being asked. The students had repeated exposure to higher-order thinking questions which allowed them to reflect more deeply about the content versus trying to understand the questions being asked. Additionally, evidence supported the concept of students bringing existing knowledge of the word family patterns, to the current task of building

new word meanings. Mrs. Nicks would scaffold the learning to engage the metacognitive processes. In order to scaffold the learning, Mrs. Nicks would engage in discourse which challenged the students thinking. Mrs. Nicks would then use those same types of questions after reading the text to engage students in dialogic discourse around the text. The students would transfer their knowledge from one setting to the next, showing a new understanding of the text. Mrs. Nicks makes note of this in her post semi-structured interview.

Mrs. Nicks: They are getting used to being able to think about their thinking, in a sense being kind of cognitive because they, it's not just, this a word. It's like they have to think why. Why does that word make the word 'cat' or whatever? And once they like, start to think more about the phonics that will transition into more of the comprehension and like looking at the pictures or reading stories because they're getting use to like going into deeper thinking. So, it kind of becomes normal for them because if you don't have those conversation, they're not going to be sued to those deeper thinking and talking like that."

Teacher-participant, Mrs. Carpenter, also demonstrated intentional use of language during lessons by requiring the students to articulate their thinking. During the beginning of a guided reading lesson, students were practicing the commonly confused letters *b* and *d* by building the words with letter tiles.

Mrs. Carpenter: Build the word 'bat'.

Students built the word 'bat', with one student building 'dat'. Student then switched and built 'bat'.

Mrs. Carpenter: Why did you move that?

S: Because it sounds like /b/.../b/.

In this example, the student identified the confusion, took action, and then could articulate their thinking as to why they switched the letters. For an emerging reader, these beginning steps to articulate thinking lay the foundation for deeper, more rich dialogue. If the teacher-participant had not challenged the student, there would have been a missed opportunity for a metacognitive experience allowing students to demonstrate their metacognitive knowledge. These examples required the teacher to be skilled in the oral language modeled for students and in the manner questioning was used as a dialogic tool.

Questioning as a Dialogic Discourse Tool

The teacher-participant, Mrs. Carpenter, expressed how she had been hesitant to put books in the hands of students, feeling the need for more teacher-directed instruction. However, as a participant in the study, she made a conscious effort to use the guided reading framework. This attempt was evident in the first lesson when she gave each student a book to complete an introductory picture walk through the book. Mrs. Carpenter purposely selected text and handed the text to the students. Starting with the cover, Mrs. Carpenter took the students through the text, changing her types of questions.

Mrs. Carpenter: What sort of things do you need to bring to school?

S1: Backpack!

S2: Crayons.

S3: Pencils.

Mrs. Carpenter: Why?

S1: You might need them.

As the students continued to discuss the cover and the story, Mrs. Carpenter continued to ask the students questions like:

How do you know that?

What's going on?

Why do you think that?

At one-point Mrs. Carpenter asked the students why they thought the vehicle was going to school. The students noticed a seatbelt in the picture, which led them into a conversation about school buses having seatbelts. Since the picture showed a seatbelt, the students had to articulate their thinking regarding the image. Due to the amount of time spent on the initial conversation about the book and the phonemic awareness activities, the group was never given an opportunity to read the book during the small group meeting.

However, by the second lesson, Mrs. Carpenter had already begun managing the time in a way which allowed students to read aloud the text while she gave explicit feedback. She gave appropriate time in the lesson to center instruction around text and to have conversations around the meaning of the text. She demonstrated an ability to shift her questions to meet the needs of her students. This created opportunities for students to engage with the text and think more critically about what they were reading. This also shifted the lesson from being more teacher-directed to more student-centered. This example came from Mrs. Carpenter listening to an individual student reading during guided reading instruction:

Mrs. Carpenter: Check this word for me...What is he doing?

S: Playing with his boat.

Mrs. Carpenter: Where?

S: In the tub!

Mrs. Carpenter: What's in the tub?

S: Bubbles!

Mrs. Carpenter: What's another name for bubbles?

S: Soap??

Mrs. Carpenter: Let's try to look at the word. What is a way you can help yourself?

S: take away the first sound.../ud/.../s/ /u/ /d/...

Mrs. Carpenter: Have you heard of suds?

S: No.

Mrs. Carpenter: Suds are another name for bubbles.

Another example, during the beginning of a guided reading group, Mrs. Carpenter challenged students to consider what type of book they were reading:

Mrs. Carpenter: What do you know about bears?

S: They run.

S: They eat fish.

S: They bite.

S: They spin really slow.

Mrs. Carpenter: Looking at the cover- do you think it's fiction or nonfiction?

S: Fiction, he has a kite.

S: Nonfiction, because bears are real.

Mrs. Carpenter: Let's read the story and see if we can decide.

Questioning was also used as a dialogic tool by teacher-participant, Mrs. Nicks, who used questioning during most of the guided reading sessions to create metacognitive experiences. At the end of her lessons, she would ask the students to articulate something they learned.

Mrs. Nicks: Tell me something you learned today.

S: I learned the first sound!

S: I tried to make this turn into ride when I thought it was walk or run, because she's not walking.

This was vastly different from the teacher-participant, Mrs. Owens, who kept control of the lessons every time. This teacher-participant took a more traditional approach to the small group instruction, with the teacher dominating the lesson. While she did have the components of the guided reading lesson, such as asking students questions at the beginning and end of the reading, she continued to choral read with students during the small group lessons. The questions were lower-level thinking questions, with one right answer. Mrs. Owens asked the questions quickly and left very little time for students to engage in dialogue.

Mrs. Owens: Let's look at the front cover. What do you see?

S: Duck.

Mrs. Owens: Do you think there will be duck in the story?

S: Yes.

Mrs. Owens: Why do you think he'll be important?

S: He may have to go to work.

Mrs. Owens: I think he'll be important because he is on the front cover.

Mrs. Owens was trying to use questioning as a tool but she asked simple, closed-ended questions and did not expand on student answers or engage them in dialogue beyond the answers she was expecting. During the readings, her students engaged in choral reading and there was little time spent checking for understanding or strategically prompting students at point-of-difficulty. This was evident in her students DRA levels. At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Owens only had 1 student-participant without an instructional level. The student read at the

independent level on one level and the next level they read at the frustrational level. At the end of the study, Mrs. Owens had 8 student-participants without an instructional level. This was almost 62% of her student-participants.

Research Question Number Two

The second research question was investigating how shared experiences between the teacher and students helps to inform instructional practices. As teachers engage in conversations with students, the dialogue becomes the tool with which teachers engage, scaffold, and confirm understanding with during the guided reading lesson. The teacher's ability to ask questions or respond to students' statements can hinder or encourage learning, which should provide the teacher with critical information in planning future instruction. These shared dialogic experiences between teacher and student should be considered when developing lessons to meet the needs of students.

The semi-structured interviews yielded several positions regarding how shared dialogic experiences help to inform instructional practices. It was evident during every interview, each teacher-participant was focusing on what they feel their students should be learning instead of using shared experiences to plan future instruction.

Mrs. Greene: I mean, it's hard in the beginning because you don't know what they have mastered and what they haven't mastered. And then it's also hard because you have some students who should have mastered certain skills by this point that have not. And so you kind of have to sit back and say, 'ok, well do they need extra help in certain areas? Do they need to be pulled out', you know?...I would definitely say I am comfortable teaching literacy in general, but I'll

definitely say it gets, it gets easier as you know, as you know your students and what they can do.

Multiple teacher-participants stated they felt they had made changes from the beginning of the study until the end due to getting to know their students better. Each seemed unable to articulate how they used the learning environment to better inform their instruction. Teacher-participant, Mrs. Carpenter, did speak to changes made throughout the lesson, but did not actually articulate or make connections to shared experiences with students.

Mrs. Carpenter: I started thinking more about each of my lessons more than I had in the past before I just pulled groups and sort of picked out skills as we went, what, how can we improve. But, now I sort of think ahead, which is what I should do all the time....I feel like now I sort of planned which groups I want to pull, what books I want to read with them, what exactly what I want to do with that book and what I would to get out of it. It doesn't always happen, but you know, so I have sort of an idea of where I want to go.

Mrs. Carpenter did speak to considering her students and their needs when making text selections but did not fully explain how she considers dialogic experiences with students when selecting texts.

Mrs. Carpenter: I'm looking at the book and thinking about the kids who are going to read it and will that fit them and I don't, I don't care if they're labeled A, B, or C, I'm just using a book that works for them.

There were several teacher-participants who made intentional moves towards focusing more on building meaning, engaging students more in reading and enjoying reading, and using students' voices to inform their instruction. There was evidence supporting more student-

centered classrooms with the teachers who used students' responses and statements during the guided reading lesson to inform their instructional practices.

Mrs. Carpenter: So, I've tried, I've made a point to before we even open a book, sort of look at it and talk about what we might find in there or what we know about that topic already. And I think that helped. That doesn't even only help them, it helps me to sort of come up with more things to talk, to talk about as we go on and really use more of where they're at, to facilitate, and that was something that I had never really considered before....now I really sort of try and think about like what can I, before we even read it, what can we do to sort of set the stage for understanding, which I feel like that's something that maybe I didn't really quite realize how important it was in Kindergarten.

The teacher-participants who made little attempt to consider dialogue with their students as a way to inform their teaching also seemed to struggle the most with using the guided reading framework. While they spoke about implementing guided reading in their classrooms, their lessons did not actually include the components of the guided reading framework. If their lesson did incorporate components of guided reading, they would implement ineffective strategies or instructional practices that contradicted the purposes of guided reading. Ineffective strategies included choral reading with students during guided reading, students reading aloud one-at-a-time without the teacher strategically prompting, and instructional time being wasted. In one lesson observation, Mrs. Greene brought students to her table for small group time, but had several students sitting at the table not doing anything while she gave a reading assessment to one of the students. This was wasted time. When her students did start reading, they took turns reading one page aloud with the teacher simply stating the unknown word at point-of-difficulty.

When asked about how her thinking has changed in terms of guided reading and using dialogue as an instructional tool, in addition to how her instructional moves have changed throughout the course of the study, Teacher-participant Mrs. Greene, claimed she had made changes but when she actually spoke to those changes it was about changes she wanted to make the next school year, not the students in her current class. The changes were also ways her students would work independently, so she was still missing the dialogic connection.

Mrs. Greene: Yeah, so what I decided to do for next year was I decided to have four book boxes and in each book box, it's different activities, so they'll have a menu basically for the whole month and it's basically they can do any of the things that they want and that week where they have to complete these box things in that week. Um, it's something different every single day.

It was clear from analyzing the data for research question number one teacher-participants were still struggling to implement guided reading and make dialogic discourse a priority in their instructional habits. While several teacher-participants were taking steps to make intentional changes, several were not. This may have been impacting how teacher-participants were using dialogic shared experiences to inform their instructional practices, as it was evident their conversations lacked details regarding how shared experiences with their students were driving their instructional moves.

Emerging Theory

When considering each of the categories, a theory does begin to emerge. Moving beyond the misconceptions of guided reading and pressures felt by administrations, those who actively engaged in the study had experiences which provided insights into the use of dialogue as an instructional tool in the classroom. Mrs. Nicks and Mrs. Carpenter's ability to use intentional

language and questioning to support students from one learning task to the next, provided the foundational scaffold needed to begin engaging students in dialogic discourse. The discourse centered around literacy experiences provided students with necessary metacognitive experiences to begin perpetuating knowledge. Thus, evidence derived from the study supports the use of dialogic discourse as a way to scaffold student learning. The emerging theory suggests that when students are presented with a task, they bring their current knowledge or understanding with them. During the learning opportunity, teachers scaffold the task by using intentional language and questioning to engage students in metacognitive processes. This use of dialogic discourse allows for the construction of new learning, which can then be transferred to new tasks. See Figure I in Chapter V for a visual representation of the emerging theory.

While this current study supports the emerging theory explained here, more studies would need to occur before moving this theory to fact.

Summary

While each of the teacher-participants in this study were teaching for the first time at the school used for this study, they each had a unique background. Each expressed a genuine passion for teaching and working with students. Although most claimed a dialogic stance in their teaching, this was not always observed in their teaching. Lack of knowledge surrounding guided reading and a focus on teaching isolated skills during small group instruction meant missed opportunities and less effective strategies being used, which hindered the use of dialogic discourse. However, for the teacher-participants who made attempts to engage students with more opportunities to read books and have more dialogue around text, there was clear evidence of students transferring knowledge from one task to the next task, which encouraged dialogic discourse. Teacher-participants who made attempts to use questioning as an instructional

scaffold to construct meaning also created a more student-centered classroom environment as the students were taking more ownership in their learning.

Chapter V. Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study was to examine the strategic use of dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework to promote student-centered classroom practices in primary grade classrooms in the Southeastern United States area and to examine the perceptions of teachers and students in regards to their experiences with dialogic discourse. Additionally, based on the examinations, the purpose of the study was to potentially develop a theory of a teacher's use of dialogic discourse within guided reading to promote student-centered practices. Chapter II of the current study provided a preliminary review of the literature. The preliminary review helped provide a context for which the study would be conducted, while providing some insight into the concepts. This allowed the researcher to be informed while focusing the study. In staying true to the grounded theory methodology which looks to construct a theory rather than test a hypothesis, a more robust review of literature occurred during the data analysis process. The review of literature during the analysis was conducted as the theory began to emerge in order to ground the theory. The review of literature is integrated into the conclusions to further support the grounded theory.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to examine the use of dialogic discourse during guided reading instruction:

1. How does the use of dialogic discourse within guided reading promote a more student-centered classroom?
 - a. What are the factors hindering or encouraging dialogic discourse?
2. How do the shared dialogic experiences between teacher and student help inform classroom practices?

Dialogic Discourse within Guided Reading

The intentional use of dialogue during guided reading instruction is important if teachers are trying to promote student-centered classrooms. Student-centered classrooms emphasize collaboration, critical thinking, and student-led learning. Teachers who create opportunities for metacognitive experiences which allow students to think critically, while also allowing dialogue to be used as a tool to create deeper meanings and understandings, are providing students with the necessary skills to strengthen their reading abilities. Using dialogue is imperative because “reading is language and language is thinking” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, p. 274). Guided reading supports construction of knowledge through dialogue because “one of the purposes of guided reading is to bring the control of oral language to the processing of a text” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, p. 274). Fountas and Pinnell (2012) argued “oral language is the most powerful system the young child brings to initial experiences with the reading process” (p. 274).

Often times in the primary grades, especially in kindergarten, the daily small group instruction focuses heavily on phonological awareness and phonics skills, lacking emphasis on constructing meaning while reading. However, in order for students to actively engage in the reading, they must be able to process multiple facets of reading simultaneously. These facets include concepts about print such as, spacing, letter sounds and patterns, page layout, and

spacing, in addition to constructing meaning, understanding vocabulary, semantics, and syntax and processing visual features such as pictures (Askew & Pinnell, 1998).

The guided reading framework, which includes components of letter and word study, reading and writing instruction, and comprehension building has been supported in the research as being a best practice for literacy instruction (Clay, 1985; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Too often teachers are not actually engaging in the guided reading framework, even when their school or district expect teachers to implement guided reading (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Fisher, 2008). Ferguson and Wilson (2009) conducted a study across all elementary grade levels looking to identify what grade levels teachers taught who used the guided reading framework and their perceptions of the small group instructional process. Using the survey method, the researchers asked for participants, spanning across 4 elementary schools, to respond to questions about their teaching experiences, professional development trainings, their methods for literacy instruction, and for them to define guided reading. While Ferguson and Wilson (2009) study found mostly primary teachers stating implementation of the guided reading framework, almost every teacher had received professional development in guided reading, learned about guided in their university courses, or had read professional texts about guided reading. However, even the teachers who reported using guided reading, not every teacher implemented guided reading on a daily basis. Many of the teachers cited time, management, and lack of self-regulated learners as reasons for not implementing guided reading. In addition, Ferguson and Wilson (2009) reported many of the teachers, even those who used guided reading, could not fully define guided reading.

Ferguson and Wilson's 2009 study supports the findings of the current study. Although the school site used for the current study expected teachers to implement guided reading, many of the teachers lacked understanding of what guided reading actually is and how to properly

implement guided reading. In addition, while three of the five teacher-participants attended the guided reading training put on by the researcher, all five teacher-participants expressed understanding of guided reading and believed guided reading was a best practice. Each expressed similar reasoning's as the Ferguson and Wilson (2009) study for why they struggled to implement guided reading. More than one lesson observation demonstrated teachers spending small group instructional time on isolated phonemic awareness skills with time running out before teachers were able to hand students an actual book to read. One teacher-participant stated during a lesson, "*We are not going to have time to read a book today*" spending the entire small group time on letter sounds.

The teacher-participants in the current study spoke openly about struggling to balance both word study and comprehension studies while meeting with students in small groups. When working with students at lower reading levels, such as Level A, Level B, and/or Level C, the teacher-participants had difficulties placing books in students' hands and creating dialogue around the text selected for the lessons. Iaquina (2006) wrote:

In a truly balanced literacy program, how you teach is as important as what you teach. Skillful teachers use their knowledge of literacy development and literacy processes to decide where to go next, independently of the commercial materials they use; when to intervene and when not to; when to draw children's attention to which features of text; and how to model and explain strategies in ways that children can make their own (p. 417).

This was evident in one lesson when a teacher spent time on phonemic awareness activities, then spent time on introducing the book, but did not actually read the book. While powerful for young beginning readers, this initial conversation introducing the book, in addition to a large amount of

the small group time spent on phonemic awareness activities, the students did not end up having time during their lesson to actually complete a reading of the text. As teachers who were new to using guided reading, implementing a balanced literacy framework would naturally take time and practice. This is especially true when considering administrative expectations, ineffective classroom instructional habits, and lack of full knowledge about the guided reading framework and dialogic teaching.

Interestingly, Turner (1995) conducted a study looking at learning contexts in various classrooms using different approaches to literacy instructional methods to gain insight into student behaviors and literacy tasks. The learning environments studied were primary classrooms which included student-centered classrooms and classrooms using basal systems which were completely teacher-directed and controlled learning environments. After observing various classroom settings and conducting interviews, Turner's (1995) study showed student-centered activities were more effective than tasks associated with scripted, basal curriculum instruction. Students in classrooms where the learning context was more student-centered were more likely to engage in reading strategies at point of difficulty and were more persistent in overcoming perceived challenges during literacy tasks. Turner's (1995) study supports the behaviors observed during the course of the current study. For the teacher-participant, Mrs. Owens, who developed guided lessons and had many elements of the guided reading framework in her small group instruction, she struggled to release control over to the students. Her teaching dominated the lesson and she left little time for dialogic discourse within her lessons. With each group, the students all engaged in choral reading alongside the teacher. Choral reading was ineffective in providing opportunities for students to problem-solve at point-of-difficulty or deepen their understanding of the readings. This was evident in her student's DRA scores which showed an

overwhelming number of students who scored on the *frustrational* level on one level, but the next level up they scored *independent*. The students were lacking an instructional level because they did not have the strategies in place to make sense of their reading at point-of-difficulty. This was due to the ineffective strategies being used by the teacher because the learning context did not provide opportunity for the teacher to scaffold within the zone of proximal development. So, while Mrs. Owens had many of the elements of the guided reading framework in her lessons, she lacked the ability to engage students in effective discourse.

Striking a balance between teacher-led learning environments and student-led learning environments is not an easy task. Silliman, Bahr, Beasman, and Wilkinson (2000) researched discourse scaffolds used by teachers among typically developing students and language learning disabled students to determine what type of scaffolding best supports students during literacy instruction. Examining both direct-instruction which used scripted, predetermined formats with expected right answers and supportive scaffolding which requires educators to engage in instructional conversations in order to support students in taking more ownership for problem-solving during literacy tasks, researchers concluded that a balance of both skills-based instruction and strategy-based instruction is needed for students to develop the necessary decoding and comprehension skills required to be a successful reader. Silliman et al. (2000) asserted, “Explicit (direct) instruction in phonemic segmentation, blending, and phoneme-grapheme correspondences contrasted with explicit scaffold-instruction that stressed four-problem strategies for analyzing phoneme-grapheme relationships produce different patterns of transfer” (p. 267). Findings indicate both are needed to effectively succeed in producing emerging readers. This is something educators need to consider when working with students during guided reading instruction. The teacher-participants in the current study often focused on

skills-based instruction versus strategy instruction. While some made attempts to balance the discourse in a way to better support their students, it is an area needing more focus and development if educators want to create successful readers. “The critical element, however, is the skillful teaching that helps young readers learn the effective strategies they need to become independent” (Jaquinta, 2006, p. 418).

In a study conducted by Davis (2010), findings imply taking a more student-centered approach during literacy instruction has a more profound impact on student literacy learning than skills-based instruction. The researcher, who was also the classroom teacher, implemented two types of instructional methods over the course of the study which included a student-centered instructional model and a skills-based instructional model. The instructional methods were each implemented during the language arts block over a 4-week period without any additional type of instructional intervention. Derived from the surveys, observations, and interviews, six constructs grounded in the data, emerged. These constructs included: choice, collaboration, challenge, learner control, goal orientation, and environmental context of learning. Speaking to the findings of the study, Davis (2010) concluded, “Student perceptions were generally more favorable when instruction and individual tasks provided opportunities for students to make choices, collaborate, and share in control of learning processes and outcomes. Tasks reflective of these characteristics were associated predominantly with the learner-centered curriculum” (p. 74). Additionally, evidence supported student engagement during student-centered instructional tasks was more-consistent than when skills-based tasks were taking place. Student engagement, therefore, becomes a critical component of literacy learning. Davis (2010) asserted, “The study suggests the possibility that students’ experiences of literacy across curricular frameworks could influence their disposition for learning and their willingness to engage in literate behaviors over time” (p.

76). When speaking with the student-participants during small group discussions in the current study, it was clear those students who were excited to talk about reading and their discussions with their teachers about their reading compared to those students who shied away from any conversation around literacy. Student-participants in the classrooms where the teacher-participants were taking a more dialogic stance had students who were able to articulate books they enjoyed reading, what they talk about with their teachers when reading books, and how conversations about what they are learning with reading helps them in other areas of their life.

Evidence from a study conducted by Sosa & Sullivan in 2013, supports the importance of taking a more dialogic stance when working with students in literacy learning experiences. Sosa & Sullivan (2013) worked with one particular teacher, observing the teacher in three separate settings where dialogic discourse was emphasized. Each of the three lessons observed were carefully analyzed. Sosa & Sullivan (2013) found “the strongest evidence of engagement in discussion is the expanding of ideas, critique of interpretations, and providing evidence both from the text and personal experience” (p. 15). While the teacher in the study was an 8th grade teacher, the findings add support to the themes in the current study. During the course of the current study, teacher-participants who were making attempts to use guided reading with fidelity made more noticeable shifts from being more teacher-centered to more student-centered, from being more monologic to more dialogic. This may have been because these teacher-participants were more invested in the study and were making more effort to consider how to engage students in conversations around the text. At the beginning of the study, Mrs. Nicks took more of a teacher-directed approach. She spoke to the goals she had but did not speak to how these goals were created with students. However, over the course of the study, with more emphasis placed on creating meaning around text, using dialogue as a scaffold, Mrs. Nicks creates a more student-

centered environment. This is supported by Gutiérrez's (2008) argument that when dialectic experiences between students and teachers create equal partners, when talk is "situated, reciprocal, and distributed" in a more balanced space, learning is transformed (p.159).

In a student-centered the classroom, the learning environment is a shared space. Knowledge is constructed through collaborate work in a classroom culture emphasizing shared dialogic experiences. McIntyre, Kyle, and Moore (2006) conducted a grounded theory study in an effort to demonstrate how one primary teacher was able to guide students throughout a lesson to lead to more dialogic interactions. They analyzed the interactions between the teacher and students as stories were read and discussed in the mystery genre. At the beginning of the study, the teacher used more direct, explicit instruction in an effort to provide students with necessary information to engage in the story. This direct instruction gained the students' desire to participate in the learning experience as the teacher then intentionally guided her students to more authentic and collaborative dialogic discussion around the text. The intentional move in creating more space for shared dialogue provided opportunities for students to develop a deeper understanding of the reading. McIntyre et al. (2006) wrote, "This study confirms other studies which suggest that classroom culture, characterized by a problem-solving environment, student decision making, student choice, collaborative work, and product-driven work, affects students' participation and subsequent construction of meaning during small-group dialogue" (p. 37). Two of the teacher-participants in the current study made intentional moves towards taking a more dialogic, student-centered approach in their instructional practices during small group instruction. As they began to balance more phonemic awareness skills with more construction of meaning around text, they engaged more naturally in authentic conversations with students. This was a change from the beginning of the study when they were controlling the lesson, missing

opportunities to put books in students' hands, and not engaging in dialogic conversations with students. It was evident the authentic conversations promoted more continuous dialogue which Brown (2015) contends "provides a context for exploration of ideas and representations of the world as opposed to a democratic education that is geared toward individualism and work force preparation" (p.3).

Dialogic discourse researcher, Alina Reznitskaya, published findings (2012) after analyzing three different classroom incidents in regards to dialogic versus monologic teaching. Reznitskaya (2012) noted stark differences in the classroom where the teacher was heavily monologic in her teaching versus the classroom where a dialogic approach was implemented. In the classroom where the teacher took a more monologic approach, the indicators Reznitskaya (2012) brought attention to include the clear authority the classroom teacher had over the classroom. The classroom teacher not only had control of the content but also the discussion taking place. The conversation was limited to basic recall, with the teacher asking students questions with one right, expected answer. The monologic teacher lacked any depth to her conversations with her students, making little to no attempt to have students use evidence to support their answers, question the text or the conversations deeper, or give time and space for conversations between students. She often missed opportunities which would allow students to deepen their thinking or their knowledge through the use of dialogic discourse as an effective tool to support deeper understandings. In complete contrast, the dialogic classroom teacher Reznitskaya (2012) studied released authority over the conversation, allowing the students to communicate and ponder open-ended questions with each other and with the teacher. The dialogic classroom teacher posed questions in a way where students had to support their answers with reason and evidence while also articulating how they drew upon their conclusions. The

teacher was also intentional and careful not to insert his own opinion into the conversation, but to encourage students to construct their answers and engage in dialogue which strengthened the students understanding of the text and made more real-world connections beyond the text. Taking this dialogical approach is critical because as Reznitskaya (2012) argues, “The pedagogical goal is to focus on the processes of thinking, to engage students in practicing and forming new ‘habits of mind’, which, in turn, help to create better judgments” (p. 453).

Throughout the course of the current study, there were times when a dialogic approach was attempted. Teacher-participants, Mrs. Nicks and Mrs. Carpenter, often requested their students to articulate their thinking and put their thinking on display. They asked their students questions on multiple occasions such as, “*Why did you do that?*” and “*Why do you think this?*”. They attempted using questioning to encourage students to think critically in order to construct new knowledge. There were also multiple occasions when teacher-participants took more monologic stances in their small group instructional time. They engaged in little dialogue as they controlled the conversation and asked closed-ended questions which required an exact answer. Direct, explicit instruction seemed to dominate the practices of certain teacher-participants. Studies conducted by Zwiers (2007) demonstrated close-ended questions dominating instructional time, with little time spent on questions which might explore concepts and ideas at a deeper level. Zwiers (2007) argues “teachers should think about how questions and other prompts contribute to daily discourse patterns and whether or not they encourage student self-expression, academic responses, and the social construction of knowledge” (p. 110). There was little time for students to collaborate or engage in dialogic conversations with each other during the current study. The lesson observation when teacher-participant Mrs. Greene did leave the students at the small group table during one lesson to monitor other students in the classroom

was one moment when students were given time to collaborate with each other. It was clear the students needed support as they struggled to answer questions around the text. When Mrs. Greene returned to the table, she missed an opportunity to create a metacognitive experience with her students because she did not attempt to extend the conversation or clear up misunderstandings. This was similar to findings in Peterson's (2016) study when she concluded, "Although there seemed to be value in allowing students to wrestle with topics and themes in complex texts, there were times when comprehension broke down because a teacher was not present to answer questions or facilitate discussion on complex topics" (p. 53).

Researchers Alvermann, O'Brien, and Dillon (1990) conducted a qualitative grounded theory study to analyze middle school teachers' discussions during assigned readings. While the study by Alvermann et al. (1990) was with a group of teachers teaching a different age, group compared to the group of the teachers and students in this current study, there are interesting connections between the studies which bring about possible implications worth noting. Alvermann et al. (1990) used the constant-comparative method to observe over 20 teachers over a two-semester time period. In addition to the observations of various content assigned readings, the researchers also asked the teachers to elaborate on their definitions of a what makes a good discussion. They also had 5 of the teachers watch videos of their classroom discussions while the researchers interviewed them to better examine the experiences of the classroom teachers. Alvermann et al. (1990) found teachers could "articulate definitions of a good discussion" but their "actual discussions seldom resembled these definitions" (p. 296). Teachers often used worksheets and textbooks and controlled the discussions through mainly lecture and recitation. Alvermann et al. (1990) also noted "because of perceived pressure from outside forces, they were more concerned about maintaining control and about covering content than about

encouraging active participation from the students in constructing the meaning of the text” (p. 296). This was similar to the findings in the current study when teacher-participants articulated their strong beliefs towards student talk in the classroom and encouraging learning through discourse, but this was rarely observed during lessons. Teacher talk dominated the lesson in Mrs. Owens and Mrs. Greene’s lessons throughout the entire study, while Mrs. Nicks, Mrs. Carpenter, and Mrs. Bruce did make attempts to make shifts. However, all expressed outside pressures having an influence on their instructional decision-making.

In addition to studies by Alverman et al. (1990) and Brown (2010), studies conducted by Nystrand et al. (2001) also support the importance of the classroom teacher and the use of dialogic discourse. Nystrand et al. (2001) study “examined the sequencing and effect of (a) teacher dialogic bids, (b) student questions, and (c) open discussion” (p. 11). While Nystrand et al. (2001) studies focused on 8th and 9th grade teachers and classrooms, there are strong connections between their findings and the findings in the current study. First, many teachers claim to take to a dialogic stance and encourage discussion but in reality, many do not actually engage in authentic discussions. Nystrand et al. (2001) stated, “Despite considerable lip service among teachers to ‘discussion,’ we found little discussion in any classes in the sense of in-depth exchanges of ideas in the absence of either questions or teacher evaluation” (p. 35). This was also found in the current study as many teacher-participants made claims of taking a dialogic stance, but lesson observations showed monologic classroom practices and little-to-no dialogic discourse. Nystrand et al. (2001) study also found the most monologic classrooms were in the classrooms where students were considered to be low-performing. In the classrooms with low-performing students, there was almost a complete absence of discussion. Nystrand et al. (2001) asserted this was “no doubt a result of emphasis on skill development and test questions about

prior reading, both negative predictors of dialogic discourse” (p. 35). Despite the difference in grade levels between Nystrand et al. (2001) studies and the current study, even in the primary grades, teacher-participants placed an emphasis on skill development and in the cases when reading a text occurred, asking one-right-answers questions. Many of the teacher-participants in the current study would explain their reasoning for their instructional practices were because of the young age of their students and the grade-levels they taught. It was common to hear “*because they are in kindergarten*” or “*since they are still learning to read*” from the teacher-participants during semi-structured interviews and debriefing sessions. Although it is clearly evident “that gifted teachers enliven the learning experience by engaging their student’s inactive inquiry”, the more likely learning environment occurring in schools can be “characterized by rote memorization and recitation of instructional materials” (Nystrand et al., 2001, p. 44).

Attempting to place more of the guided reading lesson on constructing meaning around selected text was a focus for several of the teacher-participants. For the teacher-participant, Mrs. Nicks, who transferred the types of questions she was asking from one task to the next, specifically from the phonological awareness portion of the lesson to the after reading questions, there was clear evidence to support how the appropriate use of discourse throughout the lesson created a collaborative, student-centered environment. The teacher-participant’s ability to engage the students in open discourse made discussion of the reading more powerful. “Teacher prompts help children learn how to think about different sources of information as they put together a flexible system of strategies they can apply increasingly difficult text. The process of reading must be dynamically supported by an interaction of text reading and good teaching.” (Jaquinta, 2006, p. 414). It is important to remember one of the main ideas of dialogic discourse and student-centered practices is that it is not what the teacher does, but what the students and the

teacher do collaboratively. Vygotsky (1986) states the student “does not create his own speech, but acquires the speech of adults” (p. 122). He argues that words are empty without meaning but meaning only occurs through association which is socially constructed. In order for primary students to make associations between concepts and construct meaning, teachers must engage students in dialogue.

The purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theory through constant comparative analysis of data. The emerging theory derived from this study has the potential to inform instructional practices. If teachers are wanting to make an intentional move towards taking a dialogic stance during their small group guided practice instruction, there are several strategies teachers can use, such as intentional language and questioning. As evident in the current study, teachers can use consistent, intentional language to scaffold students within their zone of proximal development. Additionally, teachers can plan and use questions to promote discourse. These questions should be centered around constructing meaning of their reading while also helping them make connections between old knowledge and new learning tasks. Questions asked by the teacher should leave opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding of the reading and expand their thinking in an effort to construct meaning and transfer knowledge from one situation to the next. These questions should serve as opportunities to create metacognitive experiences through open discussion; an “open discussion in which teachers and their students work out understandings face-to-face”, which “is the quintessential form of dialogic interaction” (Nystrand et al., 2001, p.10). Additionally, when teachers and students engage in dialogic discourse, this shared learning environment provides insights for teachers as they plan future instruction. Research demonstrates that a knowledgeable teacher who is able to respond to

students' needs to create a shared learning environment is more powerful than resources and curriculum (Brown, 2010).

The conclusion drawn from the theory derived from various points of data demonstrated when students were presented with a new learning task, their current level of understanding encouraged or hindered visible evidence of learning. During the learning opportunity, teachers who scaffolded the task by using intentional language and questioning to engage students in metacognitive processes, created a positive student-centered learning context. The use of dialogic discourse allowed for the construction of new learning, which can then be transferred to new tasks. While this current study supports the emerging theory explained here, more studies would need to occur before moving this theory to fact. Figure I provides a graphic of the emerging theory.

Figure I.

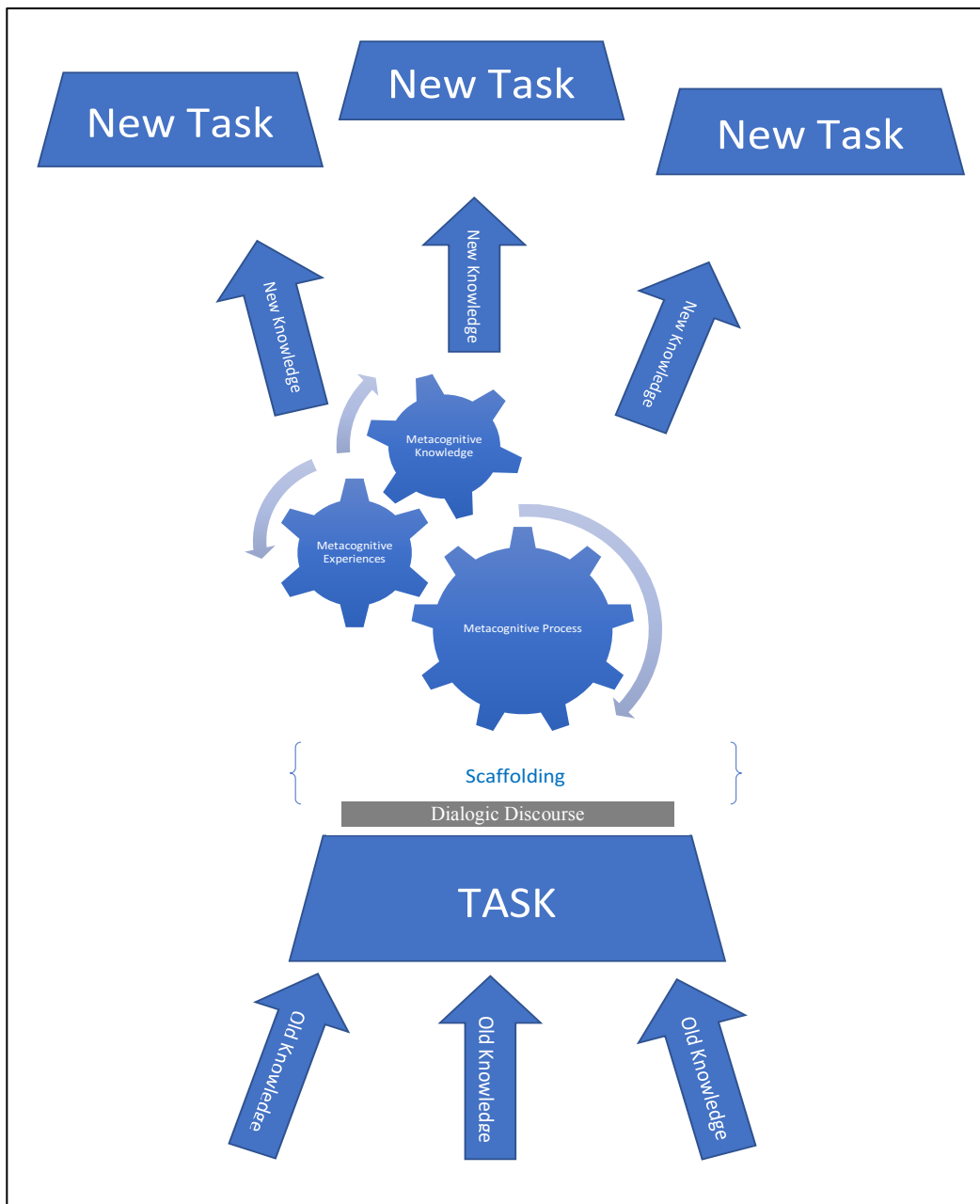


Figure I. *Students come to a task with old knowledge, through the use of dialogic discourse teachers scaffold within the zone of proximal development to engage students in the metacognitive process to promote construction of new learning. This metacognitive experience allows students to transfer new knowledge to the next task.*

Implications

The area this school is located in does not currently implement guided reading. While some teachers make attempts at implementing small group instruction, most use the traditional basal system. These traditional basal systems usually provide scripted curriculums which rely heavily on teacher-directed instruction and skill and drill practices. Teachers participating in this study were invited to participate in an after-school professional training on guided reading. Only 3 of the 5 teacher-participants joined in on the session, along with the school's instructional coach. The teacher-participants who attended this session seemed open and eager to learn more about guided reading. They stated on multiple occasions how informative the session was, including many misconceptions they had about guided reading, especially in the primary grades. Guided reading, while seemingly an easy concept to implement, can be difficult to apply with effectiveness. Fountas and Pinnell (2012) wrote about "the romance and the reality" of guided reading, stating "The practice of guided reading may appear simple, yet it is not simply to understand a single text. The goal of guided reading is to help students build their reading power—to build a network of strategic actions for processing texts" (p. 272).

While the training was an informative session, it was limited to the participants. The teacher-participants were also trying to gain a deeper understanding of guided reading while administrators were forcing ineffective practices. This made it difficult for the teachers to balance effective best practices with administrative expectations. For some teacher-participants, this balancing act was impossible and they were not able to commit to implementing guided reading with fidelity. With ineffective small group instruction practices, these teacher-participants rarely engaged in dialogic discourse.

As with any initial study using the grounded theory framework, one study is not enough to concretely suggest a theory is fact. This study, however, does lend itself to supporting emerging theories, which bring about implications for teaching reading to primary students.

Recommendations

The primary grade classroom is a unique environment with varying degrees of student abilities. Developmentally, students are still learning through exploration; curiosity driving most of their actions. Much of the time spent in primary grades literacy-related activities revolves around phonological awareness and phonics instruction. The teacher-participants for this study admitted they felt pressured to focus more on phonemic awareness and less on reading for meaning. When the focus was not on developing meaning, teacher-participants supported less of a student-centered approach and did not emphasize dialogic discourse as a way to promote successful readers. Future studies should be done to determine if specific strategies can be put in place to lay the foundation for dialogic discourse.

In order for scaffolding tools, such as dialogic discourse, to ultimately be effective, highly skilled teachers are necessary. Teacher-participants in the study would have most likely benefitted from additional trainings, professional development, or coaching support in how to implement guided reading. Once they felt confident in their small group guided practice instruction, mastering the use of dialogic discourse could become a priority. Based on the emerging themes from this study, more teacher support could lead to better learning outcomes.

Additionally, time was a constraint which could be adapted to further extend the research. Starting the research study as an outsider, it took considerable time to build trust with the teacher-participants. For some, the timeframe did not lend well to the teacher-participants fully engaging with the study in a meaningful way; I remained more of an outsider. For the teacher-

participants who fully engaged early on in the study, we did not reach a point where I, as the researcher, felt comfortable using the dialogic discourse rubric openly with the teacher-participants. Fears of evaluations and not scoring well on rubrics would have not been conducive to the study. With more time to build a coaching, collaborative partnership, the rubric would have provided more evidence to support the emerging theory.

Finally, as this study progressed, it was evident that more qualitative data was emerging than quantitative. While the intent initially was to balance the qualitative data and quantitative data in a way to fully answer the research questions, providing a more solid and robust theory grounded in data, low sample sizes led to less focus on the quantitative data. Future studies with larger samples sizes would allow for more data analyze, which may help move the theory in this current study from *emerging* to *fact*.

Conclusions

The intent of this study was to examine the strategic use of dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework to promote student-centered classroom practices. Additionally, this study also examined the perceptions of teachers and students in regards to their experiences with dialogic discourse. The primary grade level for this study was selected due to the lack of research regarding dialogic discourse within the guided reading framework in the primary grades.

Creating a collaborative space for students and teachers to transform learning in a way which was more beneficial for learning to occur was supported by the intentional use of dialogic discourse within guided reading. The teachers who made intentional moves towards implementing guided reading with fidelity began to strike a balance between word study and constructing meaning around text. Implementing the guided reading framework, created more opportunities for teachers and students to engage in meaningful dialogue. There was also

evidence to support the transfer of knowledge from one task to the next in situations where teachers engaged students in dialogic discourses.

When we consider the ideas of Bakhtin, words are only half ours until we engage in dialogue with others and it is through this exchange meaning is constructed (Bakhtin, 1981). For the teacher-participants who did not completely invest in the guided reading framework, who also struggled to engage in dialogic discourse, and who did not reflect on their practices, there was little change in their instructional practices. They continued to be more teacher-centered and there was little evidence of growth in their students' learning.

This study does lend evidence to support the emerging theory of students approaching a task with a set of preexisting knowledge, connecting old knowledge with new knowledge as teachers use dialogic discourse as a tool during guided reading to scaffold the learning, thus creating opportunities for students to transfer knowledge from task to the next task. This collaborative learning space leads to more student-centered classrooms. Through appropriate scaffolding, such as the use of dialogic discourse, students are engaging their metacognitive processes to connect prior knowledge with new understandings. These connections construct new knowledge, leading to students who are able to think critically and fully comprehend text passages. Ultimately, the metacognitive process promotes the student's ability to transfer knowledge from one setting to the next. This informs our knowledge regarding the importance of dialogic discourse even with our youngest readers.

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APPENDIX A
CODING GUIDE

Constructing Meaning through Talk: A Research Study Examining the Use of
Dialogic Discourse in Guided Reading to
Promote Student-Centered Classroom Practices in Primary Classrooms Coding Guide

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This coding guide serves to assist in understanding how data were coded and analyzed. Data were coded from the beginning of the study through constant-comparative analysis. This guide provides operational definitions of themes and supporting categories. Finally, examples of codes are given to demonstrate how they were coded in the data.

Coding

Open coding began at the beginning of the study. Careful construction of codes organized into categories ensures the experiences of the participants are solidified (Charmaz, 2014). The initial phases of coding began by breaking down the data, line-by-line, into codes. The first set of data collected were the pre-semi structured interviews. These interviews were transcribed and coded using gerunds and in-vivo coding. Glaser (1978) and Charmaz (2014) both advise grounded theorists to code using gerunds to begin coding because it encourages the researcher to see processes and stick to the data. In-vivo coding involves using the participants own words and phrases to see clear patterns emerging from the data. Gerunds and In-vivo were the main coding processes completed.

After the initial interviews were coded, lesson observations began. Field notes from these observations were coded as an on-going process throughout the study. These observations and field notes acted to illuminate emerging findings from the semi-structured interview. At the end of the study, open coding was also done on the post-semi structured interviews and small group

discussions with student-participants. Reflection journals kept by teacher-participants throughout the study were also coded using in-vivo open coding. Charmaz (2014) explained, “we learn through studying our data. Initial grounded theory coding guides our learning. Through it, we begin to make sense of our data. How we make sense of it shapes the ensuing analysis” (p. 114). Each data point went through the initial coding process, which lead to further analysis using a focused coding process.

Once initial codes began to identify patterns, a more focused approach took place. During this focused coding the researcher analyzed the initial codes to determine overarching categories. From there, the researcher sought to determine if a core variable existed, connecting the main categories. This core category supports the emerging theory. Charmaz (2014) explained, “Focused coding means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through and analyze large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely. It also can involve coding your initial codes” (p. 138). The active process of focused coding during this research study strengthened the constant-comparative process to ground the data and fully develop the main categories. During focused coding, focus was placed on the initial codes which seemed to have the most analytic power, leading to more robust and solid categories.

Using the categories, the researcher then derived themes, supporting a theory grounded in the data.

Guided Reading

Theme. Guided Reading emerged as a theme throughout the study. While analyzing the data, anything related to the guided reading framework, whether it was components of the guided

reading framework, perceptions and attitudes towards guided reading, or small group instruction time, it was coded and categorized.

Categories. Small Group Guided Practice, Guided Reading Framework, Misconceptions

Sample of Codes. Practicing phonemic awareness, Sight word practice, Integrating sight word practice and pathway of movement, Sound Boxes, One-to-one matching, ABC Chart, Reading ABC Chart, Picture/Book Walk, Decoding, Phonemic awareness, Connective Text, Reading Levels, Small Group Instruction, Concepts about Print, Framing to Count Words, b/d practice, b/d confusion, Listening to individual students reading, Comprehension, Before Reading Questions, After Reading Questions, Word Work, Appropriate, sequence of word study, Building stamina, Working toward self-regulation, Lacking confidence towards guided reading, Articulating feelings towards guided reading

Examples.

- “Point like you read a book”
- “Build *cat*...Now build *bat*”
- Teacher discussed and modeled the difference between letters, words, spaces between words
- After choral reading a text in small group setting:
T: Make a prediction...what is he late for?
S: various responses...
T: Did we read anything about school?
S: No
T: How do we know school? The pictures! Thumbs up if you like the book? Thumbs down if not! Why do you like it?
S: It's fun!
T: There are different reasons to read a book...why did we read this book?
S: To learn a new word!
- Students build bug, then change to tug, then to mud.
- T: u says /u/...I want everyone to say a word with /u/ sound. Students come up with words.

Constructing Meaning

Theme. Constructing Meaning emerged as a theme throughout the study. While analyzing the data, it was clear the purpose of dialogic discourse was to deepen student understanding of the text and extend thinking. Anything related to discourse, questioning, perceptions and attitudes toward dialogue, metacognitive processes and transfer of knowledge was coded and categorized.

Categories. Discourse, Questioning, Metacognitive Processes, Transfer

Sample of Codes. Discussing, Students verbalizing thinking, Collaborative learning session, Teacher-directed specific praise, Student led conversations around text, Articulating thinking, Articulating learning, Intentional language, Teacher making connections between text and strategy, Connection to text and strategy, Teacher Clarification, Scaffolding prompting, Building vocabulary, Dialogue around strategic reading behaviors, Discussing book, Academic Vocabulary, Attempting strategic prompting, Lack of discussion, Student Collaboration, Literacy talk, Defining talk, Pushing students to verbalize thinking, Bringing attention to students' actions, Articulating learning, Reading Strategies, Connecting picture clues to strategies, Questions around text, Questioning picture walk, Simple recall/lower level questioning, Moving between levels of questions, Probing, Asking questions about text, Before reading questioning, Connecting to prior knowledge, Reflecting on the learning process, Reading Strategies, Connecting, Using pictures and sight words to build meaning, Purpose building, Scaffolding to support meaning, Supporting answers, Strategic prompting, Lack of student thinking, Deeper thinking, Beyond memorizing, Connections, Connecting sight word practice with text, Connecting new with old, Relating learning to their lives

Examples.

- *Whisper reads...*
 Student appeals to teacher, not attending to print, guessing word
 Teacher prompts student to point
S: My dog jump
 Teacher prompts student to point
S: My dog can jump
S: My dog can jump.... Run
T: How did you fix it yourself?
S: I noticed it started w/ an "r" .../r/
S: My dog can....
 Teacher prompts with nonverbal hand motions...
 Looked at sounds... /d/ /i/ /g/.
 Student wasn't sure what dig meant, teacher explained...
T: dig means to remove, take the dirt out of the ground...
 Student struggled with climb, too...teacher spent time explaining climb.
- *T: Check this word for me.*
What is he doing?
S: playing with his boat
T: Where?
S: in the tub
T: What's in the tub?
S: bubbles
T: What's another name for bubbles?
S: soap??
T: Let's try to look at the word. What is a way you can help yourself?
S: take away the first sound...
/ud/
/s/ /u/ /d/
T: Have you heard of suds?
S: no
T: Suds are another name for bubbles.
- *T: No talking, no learning. There's a difference.*
- *T: Why did you move the c and put a b?*
- *T: Tell me something you learned today.*
S: learn the first sound
S: I tried to make this turn into ride when I thought it was walk or run, but she's not walking...
- *T: What is the girl doing*
S: jumping
T: Can you put it in the sentence?
S: I can jump.

- Teacher supports breaking down sounds while connecting to the pictures to scaffold support

- *T: Look at the pictures, what are they doing?*
S: This little gal is swinging.
S: This guy is....what is this???
S: That is a skateboard!
T: What do you do on a skateboard?
T: Let's look at word and picture.... It's not skate, why?
S: It doesn't start with /sk/

- *T: I do not want these strategies to be tools for them to memorize. I want them to talk it out and understand these strategies so it will all make sense will the letter sound and word relation.*

Missed Opportunities and Ineffective Strategies

Theme. It was clear throughout analysis there were opportunities when discourse could have been used to build meaning, connect old knowledge with new learning, and create more student-centered classrooms. Anything related to opportunities where discourse was not used, not expanded upon, or disconnected from the learning opportunity was coded and categorized. There were also strategies used by teachers that were not the most effective strategies one could use in the particular setting. When ineffective strategies were observed, they were coded and categorized.

Categories. Missed Opportunities, Ineffective Strategies

Sample of Codes. No reading or discussion around text, Time constraint, Missed Opportunity, Students not expanding and taking control of the conversation, Lack of discussion, Wrapping up lesson; no questions asked/discussion of text, Wasted time, Disconnect, No strategic prompting during lesson, Assessing students, Lack of purpose, Lack of teacher insight, Lack of age appropriate practices, Lack of depth, Choral reading, Nonsense Words, Popcorn reading, Finger pointing, Teacher-dominated, Teaching in isolation, Isolated skills instruction

Examples.

- Picture walk took up most of the time.
- Books in hand, but no reading.
- *T: Do not jump in the mud...who told him that?*
S: Mom
T: Do you think he'll listen?
S: no
T: What if it was his teacher?
S: Yes!
T: Was this book just right, too easy or too hard?
S: Too easy!
- *T: We are not going to read today, we are going to do something else.*
- Forcing students beyond Level C to point with finger.

Student-Centered Classroom

Theme. Engaging in dialogue and using discourse as a tool to engage students and extend their thinking pushes back against tradition, teacher-centered classrooms. While analyzing the data, anything related to student-centered classrooms versus teacher-centered classrooms was coded and categorized. Additionally, how teachers perceived and described their classrooms, along with words they used to describe why they teach was also coded and categorized.

Categories. Student-Centered Classrooms, Teacher-Centered (Traditional) Classrooms

Sample of Codes. Student-led Activity, Student Engagement, Switch from Teacher Dominated to Student-Dominated, Appropriate teacher dominated practices, Teacher directed-explicit instruction, Shift in thinking, Reasons for teaching

Examples.

- *T: There are pictures to help us read. Look at page 2, what do you see?*
S: Turtle
- *T: I have always loved helping students and guiding them or just kids in general.*

- *T: It's just that satisfaction that you're making a difference in that child and just I want them to have a positive outlook on school and I completely believe that school or education is the way to change the future and it can change their past. So, your environment that you come from, it kinda, it impacts your learning and your outlook on school and I feel that being a low-grade teacher, a kindergarten or first grade, it's their first, um, view of school and if you create that positive disposition towards school, they're going to continue that throughout their lives.*

- Teacher gave students letters but did not tell them the letters.
T: Can you make any sight words?
S: little...something is missing
T: You can look at the word wall.
Teacher prompted with strategy to use but didn't tell student where to look on word wall.

Sample of Coding

The following is a sample of how coding occurred when analyzing the data.

Sample One.

Focused Codes (Categories)	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participants Words and/or Researcher's Observation Notes
Discourse	TA.J.1. Dialogue Using How/Why Strategies	Connections between phonics instruction and writing/reading	We discussed strategies we can use when we are writing or reading CVC words. Then we discussed the “why” and “how” we know what word we are reading.
Discourse Metacognitive Processes	TA. J.1. Dialogue	Using dialogue as a strategy Thinking deeply	“I feel this is important for the students to discuss because they need to understand how they are reading and why it makes sense.”
Transfer	TA. J.1. Dialogue Transfer	Deeper thinking, beyond memorizing Connections	I do not want these strategies to be tools for them to memorize. I want them to talk it out and understand these strategies so it will all make sense with the letter sound and word relation.
Guided Reading	TA.J.1. Teacher goals Small Group/guided reading Shift in thinking	Putting books in students' hands Balancing decoding with meaning making	My goal is to have the students read their books earlier, rather than focusing solely on sight words and phonics.
Transfer	TA. J.1. Connections Transfer	Connecting sight words practice with text	We can use our sight words and phonics practice in the stories we are reading. I feel this will help the students be able to use their strategies more and it will be more purposeful practice.
	TA.J.2. Time	Time constraints center of focus	Again, another busy day in kindergarten!
Guided Reading	TA.J.2. Using guided reading framework Shift in thinking Balancing	Components of guided reading Changing instructional methods	I made sure to include sight words and phonics practice as well as reading books in the small group lesson. I thought it went much better!

Legend: TA= Teacher A. J=Journal Entry. 1=Number of Entry. The highlighted words were to draw attention to language around dialogue.

Sample Two.

Focused Codes (Categories)	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participants Words and/or Researcher's Observation Notes
Missed Opportunity	TC.L.1. Lack of discussion	No questions after reading	After choral reading, teacher collected book without any discussion of what was read.
Guided Reading Metacognitive Processes	TC.L.1. Reading strategies - picture clues	Set-up reading strategy but didn't follow through	T: How does the picture help us figure out the word? Students could not articulate.
Guided Reading Questioning Metacognitive processes	TC.L.2. Letter/Sound Review Practicing phonemic awareness Articulating thinking	Teacher controls Asking students to explain their thinking	Shows students the letter q. T: q- how know it is not a p? S: It's the wrong way.
Metacognitive Processes	TC.L.2. Practicing sight words	Teachers says words, students say beginning sound Students come up with sentences.	T: Let's read the title... T: A word you might see in this book is, am. Can you say a sentence using am?
Discourse Questioning Constructing Meaning	TC.L.2. Book Introduction Discussing book Asking questions Engaging students in dialogue around text Students making connections	Setting up book Introducing book to build comprehension Move from LoT questions to HoT questions Connecting to the text	T: Let's look at the front cover. What do you see? S: Duck. T: Do you think there will be a duck in the story? S: Yes T: Why do you think he'll be important? S: He may have to go to work. T: I think he'll be important because he is on the front cover. What do you think his name is? S: Max! T: Tell me more...why?

			<p>S: Because Max is on the front cover getting ready.</p> <p>T: What is he getting ready for?</p> <p>S: Church because he looks nice.</p> <p>S: School to learn!</p> <p>T: Why?</p> <p>S: Because I get ready!</p>
--	--	--	---

Legend: TC= Teacher C. L=Lesson Observation. 1=Number of Lesson Observed.

APPENDIX B
HUMAN SUBJECTS CONSENT FORM



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INFORMED CONSENT

**For a Research Study Entitled
“Making Meaning through Talk: A Research Study
Exploring the Use of Dialogic Discourse in
Guided Reading to Influence Student-Centered Classroom Practices”**

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine how teachers engage in conversations with students to promote a deeper understanding of what they are reading in class. The study is being conducted by Stacie Finley, graduate student, under the direction of Dr. Victoria Cardullo, Assistant Professor, in the Auburn University College of Education. You have been invited to participate because you are a primary grade teacher who is engaged in reading activities in the classroom and you are over the age of 19 years old.

What will be involved if he or she participates? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview at the beginning of the study. You will also be asked to attend a Guided Reading Professional Development session with Stacie Finley. You will be asked to implement Guided Reading, providing lesson plans to demonstrate the use of Guided Reading. You will be asked to allow me to observe lessons each week, record the lessons, and participate in a reflective session after the lesson. You will be asked to participate in a final interview at the end of the study. This will take place during your literacy instructional time. Your total time commitment will be 30-45 minute initial interview, 4 hour Guided Reading Training, 45 minutes per week of teaching observation, 30-45 minutes per week reflection sessions, and 30-45 minute final interview. The study will run for 10 weeks.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risk associated with participating in this study is breach of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, we will not use your name or site location in any publication or presentation that may come from this study. No identifying information will be presented for public use. Any data collected will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the offices of Stacie Finley or Dr. Victoria Cardullo at Auburn University or in a locked filing cabinet at the home of Stacie Finley.

Are there any benefits to you to participate? If you participate in this study, you can expect to think deeply about how you use dialogue in the classroom. You can also expect to be able to reflect at a deep level on your own teaching practice. This study is designed to provide insight for the research community into how conversations about what is being read can influence a student’s reading achievement, and to provide a deeper understanding for educators who read the results of this study. We/I cannot promise that he/she will receive any or all of the benefits described.

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Page 1 of 2



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Are there any costs? There are no costs to participate in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw from the study at any time. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it's identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University College of Education.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The data collected will be protected by Stacie Finley or Dr. Victoria Cardullo. Information obtained through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, or presented at a professional meeting.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Stacie Finley at slf0024@auburn.edu or Dr. Victoria Cardullo at vmc0004@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you for you to keep for your records.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by Phone (334)-844-5966 or email at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY, YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO TO PARTICPATE.

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Participant's Signature Investigator Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name Printed Name

Co-Investigator Date

Printed Name

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PARENTAL PERMISSION/CONSENT

**For a Research Study Entitled
“Making Meaning through Talk: A Research Study
Exploring the Use of Dialogic Discourse in
Guided Reading to Influence Student-Centered Classroom Practices”**

Your son or daughter is invited to participate in a research study to examine how his or her teacher engages in conversations to promote a deeper understanding of what they are reading in class. The study is being conducted by Stacie Finley, graduate student, under the direction of Dr. Victoria Cardullo, Assistant Professor, in the Auburn University College of Education. Your son/daughter is invited to participate because he/she is in a primary grade and is engaged in reading activities in the classroom.

What will be involved if he or she participates? If you decide to allow him or her to participate in this research study, he or she will be asked to talk about how they are talking about their reading with their teacher and to read aloud to the researcher. This will take place during their literacy instruction time. Activities your child’s teacher has already planned will be observed. Your son/daughter’s total time commitment will be less than one hour per week during regular literacy instruction. The consent form is giving permission for your child to be interviewed about class discussions during literacy time, and that this interview data can be used for this study.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risk associated with participating in this study is break of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, we will not use your child’s name in any publication or presentation that may come from this study. Any data collected will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the offices of Stacie Finley or Dr. Victoria Cardullo at Auburn University or in a locked filing cabinet at the home of Stacie Finley.

Are there any benefits to your son/daughter or others? If he/she participates in this study, he/she can expect to think deeply about a text he or she is already reading in class. We/I cannot promise that he/she will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Are there any costs? There are no costs to participate in this study.

If you (or your son/daughter) change your mind about his/her participation, he/she can be withdrawn from the study at any time. Your son/daughter’s participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw him/her, your son/daughter’s data can be withdrawn as long as it’s identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to allow your son or daughter to participate or stop participating will not jeopardize your or his/her future with Auburn University College of Education. Your child’s participation in this study will have no impact on their grades.



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Your son/daughter's privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The data collected will be protected by Stacie Finley or Dr. Victoria Cardullo. Information obtained through his/her participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, or presented at a professional meeting.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Stacie Finley at slf0024@auburn.edu or Dr. Victoria Cardullo at vmc0004@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you for you to keep for your records.

If you have questions about your son/daughter's rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by Phone (334)-844-5966 or email at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH FOR YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER TO PARTICPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY, YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW HIM OR HER TO PARTICPATE.

Parent/Guardian Signature Investigator Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name Printed Name

Minor's Name Date

Co-Investigator Date

Printed Name

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APPENDIX C

PROTOCOL FOR INITIAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHER

PARTICIPANTS

Interview Protocol: Making Meaning through Talk: A Research Study Exploring the Use of Dialogic Discourse in Guided Reading to Influence Student-Centered Classroom Practices

Date of Interview: _____ Location: _____

Interviewer: Stacie Finley, Auburn University Doctoral Candidate

Interviewee: _____ School System Employed: _____

Previous School System Employed, if applicable: _____

Number of Years with School System: _____ Years in Education: _____

Description of Study:

The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study will be to examine the strategic use of dialogic discourse within the Guided Reading framework to influence student-centered classroom practices in primary grade classrooms in East Central Alabama and to examine the perceptions of teachers in regards to the use of dialogic discourse for improving student achievement. In an effort to identify the theory surrounding dialogic discourse, this study will consist of an interview with primary grade teachers from East Central Alabama area to discuss their knowledge, experiences, and attitudes towards dialogic discourse.

This interview should last no longer than 30 to 35 minutes. To help with note taking, I would like to record our conversation using electronic media. Only researchers on the project will be able to listen to the recordings, which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet our human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for your consideration and/or participation in this interview.

By signing below, you agree to participate in this interview.

Signature

Date

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me the reasons you became a teacher.
2. Describe the steps you took to become a teacher.
3. Describe what a typical school day would look like for you.
4. Tell me about the training or professional development you received in teaching literacy.
5. Tell me about your literacy instruction.
6. What type of literacy curriculum do you currently use?
7. Tell me what it is like to work with _____ graders during literacy instruction.
8. How comfortable do you feel teaching literacy?
9. What do you think are challenges that _____ graders face when learning literacy skills and strategies?
10. Knowing the challenges some students face, tell me how you plan and implement instruction to meet their needs.
11. Tell me about the types of conversations you have with your students during literacy instruction.
12. How often would you say students are allowed to have conversations about their learning each day?
13. Describe the types of questions you ask students before, during, and after reading a text.
14. Tell me how you teach students to make connections between previous learning and new learning? (transfer knowledge)
15. Describe how your current literacy instruction aligns with your beliefs on teaching literacy to second graders.
16. Thinking about your experiences with teaching literacy, tell me how you feel the current practices are achieving the intended purpose?
17. Is there anything else you would like to talk about today?

Post Interview Comments or Observations:

APPENDIX D

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WITH STUDENTS

Pre- Study

1. What do you like about reading at school?
2. What do you not like about reading at school?
3. Tell me about your favorite book.
4. Tell me about what you and your teacher talk about during reading time?
5. Do you and your teacher talk about the books you read?

Post- Study

1. Tell me what you like about reading at school.
2. Tell me what you do not like about reading at school.
3. Do you have a new favorite book...tell me about it?
4. Do you think the conversations you have had with your teacher about the books you read in class are different now? Tell me how they are different.
5. Tell me about what you and your teacher talk about during reading time.

APPENDIX E
INSTRUMENTS

DIT Rubric used to evaluate the lesson as taught (enacted lesson)

Indicator	Monologic	Mixed Monologic/Dialogic	Dialogic
Authority	The teacher has exclusive control over discussion content and processes. The teacher nominates (calls on) students, asks questions, initiates topical shifts, and evaluates answers.	The teacher provides occasional opportunities for students to engage in the discussion. These are rare and may involve only a few students. Most of the time the teacher controls the turn-taking, prescribes topic choice, and reshapes the discussion to align with specific content.	Students share the major responsibilities for the purpose and substance of the discussion. They manage turns, ask questions, react to each other's ideas, suggest topical shifts, and propose procedural changes.
Questions	Teacher questions target of recall of specific facts. These are simple questions with one correct answer. The teacher already knows the answers to the questions asked.	The teacher asks questions of mixed quality, including complex, open-ended questions. Open questions are often designed to "lead" students to a narrow range of interpretations of what the teacher deems acceptable.	The discussion centers on truly open and cognitively challenging questions. The questions from the teacher and students target higher order thinking, involving students in critical evaluation and analysis.
Feedback	The teacher uses short, formulaic, or ambiguous feedback. The feedback does not invite students to further develop their answers (e.g., "umm. Ok. Anyone else?").	The quality of teacher follow-up is mixed. The teacher often listens to and works with student responses, but occasionally misses important opportunities to help the group to advance their inquiry.	The teacher consistently works with student answers to inspire further exploration. The teacher praises or questions the process of reasoning, not the conclusions (e.g., "But how is cheating different from lying?").
Meta-Level	The teacher does not relate student answers to each other.	The teacher sometimes misses opportunities to connect students' ideas.	The teacher takes opportunities to make visible the connections among students' ideas and prompt students to relate their ideas to others'. The teacher attributes student ideas and questions to specific speakers.
Explanation	Students are not asked explain what they think and why. Their responses to questions are brief and factual, consisting of a word or phrase.	Students are occasionally asked to share opinions and provide good justification for them. Longer student responses may represent simple retelling of events or processes.	Students are expected and prompted to take personal positions on the issue (e.g., "I think," "I believe," "I feel") and support them with reasons and examples. They make detailed contributions, explaining their thinking.
Collaboration	Student responses are short, disjointed, and unrelated to each other. Students primarily "report" about established, known facts.	Students occasionally build on each other's ideas. The collaboration often involves sharing of similar experiences, rather than a critical analysis of each other's ideas (e.g., "That happened to me, too...").	Students engage in critical and collaborative construction of ideas. Their responses are chained together, as they react to each other's ideas. The teacher supports students in making connections and expects students to collaborate.

Source: Reznitskaya, A., Gline, M., & Oyler, J. (2011). Dialogic Inquiry Tool. *Montclair, NJ: The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.*

Component 1: Lesson Organization

1	No lesson plan is evident.	2	Lesson plan is evident, but lacks many components. No evidence lesson plans are consistently completed and used.	3	Lesson plan is evident with few components missing. Evidence shows lesson plans are consistently completed and used.	4	Lesson plan shows focus for reading, book introduction/overview, unfamiliar words to introduce/discuss, and teaching points. Evidence shows lesson plans are consistently completed and used.
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Component 2: Classroom Management (whole class)

1	Few students are on task. Materials are not organized and readily available. Routines are not established or followed.	2	Some students are on task. Few materials are organized and readily accessible. Few routines are established and followed.	3	Most students are on task. Most materials are organized and readily accessible. Most routines are established and followed.	4	All students are on task. All materials are organized and readily accessible. Routines easily discerned and students are "self-regulated".
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Component 3: Student Grouping (initial and ongoing)

1	Students are not in guided reading groups.	2	Students are in small heterogeneous (not based on text level or need) groups. No evidence of flexible grouping.	3	Students are in small mostly static groups (5 students or less) based upon their initial instructional reading level. Some evidence of flexible grouping.	4	Students are in small flexible groups (5 students or less) based upon their instructional reading level as measured through ongoing running records.
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Component 4: Matching Text to the Reader

1	No students are reading texts on their instructional reading level.	2	Few students are reading texts on their instructional reading level.	3	Most students are reading text on their instructional reading level.	4	Each student is reading text on their instructional reading level.
----------	---	----------	--	----------	--	----------	--

Component 5: Before Reading Activities

1	No evidence of student engagement in the text prior to first reading.	2	Some evidence of one of the following: activating prior knowledge, engaging students' interest, demonstrating problem solving, or establishes purpose for reading.	3	Evidence of most of the following: activating prior knowledge, engaging students' interest, demonstrating problem solving, or establishes purpose for reading.	4	Activates prior knowledge, engages students' interest, demonstrates problem solving, and establishes purpose for reading.
----------	---	----------	--	----------	--	----------	---

Comp. 1:6: During Guided Reading

1	2	3	4
Students take turns reading aloud (round robin) to group as other students are asked to follow along, or teacher reads entire text aloud, or all students read entire text aloud.	Students independently read the text, however, the teacher either listens to no students or very few students individually reading while prompting and/or taking anecdotal notes (1:1 conference).	Students independently read the text as the teacher listens to most students individually reading while prompting and/or taking anecdotal notes (1:1 conference).	Students independently read the text as the teacher listens to all individual students read while prompting and taking anecdotal notes (1:1 conference).

Component 7: 1:1 Conference During Guided Reading

1	2	3	4
No 1:1 conference is occurring.	Some 1:1 conferences occur, however, components are missing.	1:1 conferences occur and most components are in place.	Teacher listens to individual students read aloud. Teacher takes anecdotal notes regarding student reading behaviors. Teacher prompting and scaffolding to student is evident. Teacher provides praise point & teaching point.

Component 8: After Reading Activities

1	2	3	4
No evidence of discussion around comprehension or problem solving strategies.	Few students are engaged in discussion around comprehension and problem solving strategies. Teacher guides the group to discuss the meaning of the text while keeping the focus on the purpose that was established for reading.	Most students are engaged in discussion around comprehension and problem solving strategies. Teacher guides the group to discuss the meaning of the text while keeping the focus on the purpose that was established for reading.	All students are engaged in higher level discussion around comprehension and problem solving strategies. Teacher guides the group to discuss the meaning of the text while keeping the focus on the purpose that was established for reading.

Component 9: Formative and Summative Data Collection and Use

1	2	3	4
No evidence of formative or summative data for reading is available.	Little or sporadic evidence of formative and/or summative data for reading is available.	Mostly consistent evidence of formative and/or summative data for reading is available.	Evidence of year-long formative and summative data collection and teacher use is available (on-going anecdotal records, frequent running records, DRA, and benchmark assessments).

Data Collection

Component 1 score	___/4	Component 2 score	___/4	Component 3 score	___/4
Component 4 score	___/4	Component 5 score	___/4	Component 6 score	___/4
Component 7 score	___/4	Component 8 score	___/4	Component 9 score	___/4
				Grand Total	___/36

APPENDIX F
DATA COLLECTION SAMPLES

Observation Field Notes Sample 1- Guided Reading Fidelity Rubric, Dialogic Discourse Rubric, Page of Field Notes.

DIT Rubric used to evaluate the lesson as taught (enacted lesson)

Indicator	Monologic	Mixed Monologic/Dialogic	Dialogic
Authority	The teacher has exclusive control over discussion content and processes. The teacher nominates (calls on) students, asks questions, initiates topical shifts, and evaluates answers.	The teacher provides occasional opportunities for students to engage in the discussion. These are rare and may involve only a few students. Most of the time the teacher controls the turn-taking, prescribes topic choice, and reshapes the discussion to align with specific content.	Students share the major responsibilities for the purpose and substance of the discussion. They manage turns, ask questions, react to each other's ideas, suggest topical shifts, and propose procedural changes.
Questions	Teacher questions target recall of specific facts. <i>These are simple questions with one correct answer.</i> The teacher <u>already knows</u> the answers to the questions asked.	The teacher asks questions of mixed quality, including complex, open-ended questions. Open questions are often designed to "lead" students to a narrow range of interpretations of what the teacher deems acceptable. <i>Attempting more open-ended questions</i>	The discussion centers on truly open and cognitively challenging questions. The questions from the teacher and students target higher order thinking, involving students in critical evaluation and analysis.
Feedback	The teacher uses short, formulaic, or ambiguous feedback. The feedback does not invite students to further develop their answers (e.g., "umm. Ok. Anyone else?").	The quality of teacher follow-up is mixed. The teacher often listens to <u>and works with</u> student responses, but occasionally misses important opportunities to help the group to advance their inquiry. <i>Missed opportunities for dialogue</i>	The teacher consistently works with student answers to inspire further exploration. The teacher praises or questions the process of reasoning, not the conclusions (e.g., "But how is cheating different from lying?").
Meta-Level	The teacher does not relate student answers to each other.	The teacher sometimes misses opportunities to connect students' ideas.	The teacher takes opportunities to make visible the connections among students' ideas and prompt students to relate their ideas to others'. The teacher attributes student ideas and questions to specific speakers.
Explanation	Students are not asked explain what they think and why. Their responses to questions are brief and factual, consisting of a word or phrase.	Students are occasionally asked to share <u>opinions</u> and provide good justification for them. Longer student responses may represent simple retelling of events or processes.	Students are expected and prompted to take personal positions on the issue (e.g., "I think," "I believe," "I feel") and support them with reasons and examples. They make detailed contributions, explaining their thinking.
Collaboration	Student responses are short, disjointed, and unrelated to each other. Students primarily "report" about established, known facts.	Students occasionally build on each other's ideas. The collaboration often involves sharing of similar experiences, rather than a critical analysis of each other's ideas (e.g., "That happened to me, too..."). <i>Some collaboration but could have created more opportunities for this.</i>	Students engage in critical and collaborative construction of ideas. Their responses are chained together, as they react to each other's ideas. The teacher supports students in making connections and expects students to collaborate.

Source:

Reznitskaya, A., Gling, M., & Oyler, J. (2011). Dialogic Inquiry Tool. Montclair, NJ: The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.

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Component 1: Lesson Organization			
1	2	3	4
No lesson plan is evident.	Lesson plan is evident, but lacks many components. No evidence lesson plans are consistently completed and used.	Lesson plan is evident with few components missing. Evidence shows lesson plans are consistently completed and used.	Lesson plan shows focus for reading, book introduction/overview, unfamiliar words to introduce/discuss, and teaching points. Evidence shows lesson plans are consistently completed and used.
Component 2: Classroom Management (whole class)			
1	2	3	4
Few students are on task. Materials are not organized and readily available. Routines are not established or followed.	Some students are on task. Few materials are organized and readily accessible. Few routines are established and followed.	Most students are on task. Most materials are organized and readily accessible. Most routines are established and followed.	All students are on task. All materials are organized and readily accessible. Routines easily discerned and students are "self regulated".
Component 3: Student Grouping (initial and ongoing)			
1	2	3	4
Students are not in guided reading groups.	Students are in small heterogeneous (not based on text level or need) groups. No evidence of flexible grouping.	Students are in small mostly static groups (5 students or less) based upon their initial instructional reading level. Some evidence of flexible grouping.	Students are in small flexible groups (5 students or less) based upon their instructional reading level as measured through ongoing running records.
Component 4: Matching Text to the Reader			
1	2	3	4
No students are reading texts on their instructional reading level.	Few students are reading texts on their instructional reading level.	Most students are reading text on their instructional reading level.	Each student is reading text on their instructional reading level.
Component 5: Before Reading Activities			
1	2	3	4
No evidence of student engagement in the text prior to first reading.	Some evidence of one of the following: activating prior knowledge, engaging students' interest, demonstrating problem solving, or establishes purpose for reading	Evidence of most of the following: activating prior knowledge, engaging students' interest, demonstrating problem solving, or establishes purpose for reading	Activates prior knowledge, engages students' interest, demonstrates problem solving, and establishes purpose for reading.

Listened to one (5) read

Component 6: During Guided Reading			
1	2	3	4
Students take turns reading aloud (round robin) to group as other students are asked to follow along, or teacher reads entire text aloud, or all students read entire text aloud.	Students independently read the text, however, the teacher either listens to no students or very few students individually reading while prompting and/or taking anecdotal notes (1:1 conference).	Students independently read the text as the teacher listens to most students individually reading while prompting and/or taking anecdotal notes (1:1 conference).	Students independently read the text as the teacher listens to all individual students read while prompting and taking anecdotal notes (1:1 conference).
Component 7: 1:1 Conference During Guided Reading			
1	2	3	4
No 1:1 conference is occurring.	Some 1:1 conferences occur, however, components are missing.	1:1 conferences occur and most components are in place.	Teacher listens to individual students read aloud. Teacher takes anecdotal notes regarding student reading behaviors. Teacher prompting and scaffolding to student is evident. Teacher provides praise point & teaching point.
Component 8: After Reading Activities			
1	2	3	4
No evidence of discussion around comprehension or problem solving strategies.	Few students are engaged in discussion around comprehension and problem solving strategies. Teacher guides the group to discuss the meaning of the text while keeping the focus on the purpose that was established for reading.	Most students are engaged in discussion around comprehension and problem solving strategies. Teacher guides the group to discuss the meaning of the text while keeping the focus on the purpose that was established for reading.	All students are engaged in higher level discussion around comprehension and problem solving strategies. Teacher guides the group to discuss the meaning of the text while keeping the focus on the purpose that was established for reading.
Component 9: Formative and Summative Data Collection and Use			
1	2	3	4
No evidence of formative or summative data for reading is available.	Little or sporadic evidence of formative and/or summative data for reading is available.	Mostly consistent evidence of formative and/or summative data for reading is available.	Evidence of year-long formative and summative data collection and teacher use is available (on-going anecdotal records, frequent running records, DRA, and benchmark assessments).

tried but (5) were not focused

attempted to take notes on (5)

Data Collection					
Component 1 score	3.5/4	Component 2 score	2.5/4	Component 3 score	3/4
Component 4 score	3/4	Component 5 score	2/4	Component 6 score	2.5/4
Component 7 score	2/4	Component 8 score	1/4	Component 9 score	2/4
Grand Total				21.5/36	

(T) What do you know about bears?

- (S) ↳ they run
- (S) ↳ they eat fish
- (S) ↳ they bite
- (S) ↳ they spin really slow

(T) Looking at cover - do you think it's fiction or nonF? What do you think?

*much
to
over

(S) fiction → he's flying a kite!

(S) nonfiction → bc bears are real!

(T) listens to (S) read

"little bear" → title (T) reads

(last pages) "how did you figure out the words?"

(S) articulating (S) thinking! → I looked for "is" then the rest.

Observation Field Notes Sample 2- Guided Reading Fidelity Rubric, Dialogic Discourse Rubric, Pages of Field Notes.

DIT Rubric used to evaluate the lesson as taught (enacted lesson)

Indicator	Monologic	Mixed Monologic/Dialogic	Dialogic
Authority	The teacher has exclusive control over discussion content and processes. The teacher nominates (calls on) students, asks questions, initiates topical shifts, and evaluates answers.	The teacher provides occasional opportunities for students to engage in the discussion. These are rare and <u>may involve only a few students</u> . Most of the time the teacher controls the turn-taking, prescribes topic choice, and reshapes the discussion to align with specific content.	Students share the major responsibilities for the purpose and substance of the discussion. They manage turns, ask questions, react to each other's ideas, suggest topical shifts, and propose procedural changes.
Questions <i>Why</i>	Teacher questions target of recall of specific facts. These are simple questions with one correct answer. The teacher already knows the answers to the questions asked.	The teacher asks questions of mixed quality, including complex, open-ended questions. Open questions are often designed to "lead" students to a narrow range of interpretations of what the teacher deems acceptable.	The discussion centers on truly open and cognitively challenging questions. The questions from the teacher and students target higher order thinking, involving students in critical evaluation and analysis.
Feedback	The teacher uses short, formulaic, or ambiguous feedback. The feedback does not invite students to further develop their answers (e.g., "ummm. Ok. Anyone else?").	The quality of teacher follow-up is mixed. The teacher often listens to and works with student responses, but occasionally misses important opportunities to help the group to advance their inquiry.	The teacher consistently works with student answers to inspire further exploration. The teacher praises or questions the process of reasoning, not the conclusions (e.g., "But how is cheating different from lying?").
Meta-Level	The teacher does not relate student answers to each other.	The teacher sometimes misses opportunities to connect students' ideas.	The teacher takes opportunities to make visible the connections among students' ideas and prompt students to relate their ideas to others'. The teacher attributes student ideas and questions to specific speakers.
Explanation	Students are not asked explain what they think and why. Their responses to questions are brief and factual, consisting of a word or phrase.	Students are occasionally asked to share opinions and provide good justification for them. Longer student responses may represent simple retelling of events or processes.	Students are expected and prompted to take personal positions on the issue (e.g., "I think," "I believe," "I feel") and support them with reasons and examples. They make detailed contributions, explaining their thinking.
Collaboration	Student responses are short, disjointed, and unrelated to each other. Students primarily "report" about established, known facts.	Students occasionally build on each other's ideas. The collaboration often involves sharing of similar experiences, rather than a critical analysis of each other's ideas (e.g., "That happened to me, too...").	Students engage in critical and collaborative construction of ideas. Their responses are chained together, as they react to each other's ideas. The teacher supports students in making connections and expects students to collaborate.

did not get to text in lesson
attempts @ a (K) level

* ask @ to articulate "why" during word study

* all during word study

* missing in lesson

* could be expanded on

Source:
Reznitskaya, A., Glina, M., & Oyler, J. (2011). Dialogic Inquiry Tool. Montclair, NJ: The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.

Lesson plans
made
2 days
guided
reading

B

Component 1: Lesson Organization			
1	2	3	4
No lesson plan is evident.	Lesson plan is evident, but lacks many components. No evidence lesson plans are consistently completed and used.	Lesson plan is evident with few components missing. Evidence shows lesson plans are consistently completed and used. <i>① said she doesn't always write them out</i>	Lesson plan shows focus for reading, book introduction/overview, unfamiliar words to introduce/discuss, and teaching points. Evidence shows lesson plans are consistently completed and used.
Component 2: Classroom Management (whole class) <i>*day after Halloween!</i>			
1	2	3	4
Few students are on task. Materials are not organized and readily available. Routines are not established or followed.	Some students are on task. Few materials are organized and readily accessible. Few routines are established and followed.	Most students are on task. Most materials are organized and readily accessible. Most routines are established and followed.	All students are on task. All materials are organized and readily accessible. Routines easily discerned and students are "self regulated".
Component 3: Student Grouping (initial and ongoing)			
1	2	3	4
Students are not in guided reading groups.	Students are in small heterogeneous (not based on text level or mixed) groups. No evidence of flexible grouping.	Students are in small mostly static groups (5 students or less) based upon their initial instructional reading level. Some evidence of flexible grouping.	Students are in small flexible groups (5 students or less) based upon their instructional reading level as measured through ongoing running records.
Component 4: Matching Text to the Reader <i>*making attempts to use connective text</i>			
1	2	3	4
No students are reading texts on their instructional reading level.	Few students are reading texts on their instructional reading level.	Most students are reading text on their instructional reading level.	Each student is reading text on their instructional reading level.
Component 5: Before Reading Activities			
1	2	3	4
No evidence of student engagement in the text prior to first reading.	Some evidence of one of the following: activating prior knowledge, engaging students' interest, demonstrating problem solving, or establishes purpose for reading	Evidence of most of the following: activating prior knowledge, engaging students' interest, demonstrating problem solving, or establishes purpose for reading	Activates prior knowledge, engages students' interest, demonstrates problem solving, and establishes purpose for reading.

Before reading focused on CAP > counting words, spaces, etc. ① did not "discuss" the book

Lesson ended; did not get to book

N/A did not happen

Component 6: During Guided Reading			
1	2	3	4
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1	2	3	4
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Data Collection			
Component 1 score	3.5/4	Component 2 score	2.5/4
Component 4 score	3/4	Component 5 score	1/4
Component 7 score	2/4	Component 8 score	0/4
Component 3 score		2/4	
Component 6 score		0/4	
Component 9 score		0/4	
Grand Total		12/36	

(detailed lesson plans)

Level A

Sight word practice

ABC chart

(pathway of movement)

point like you read a book -

sound boxes

↳ directionality

cat (backwards)

- one to one directionality

→ moves from tiles to letters

bat sat

strong scaffolding

"why" - put thinking out loud moved letters k at verbalize

(brought attention to actions)

Why? (often has (s) explain action)

difference between letters & words,
spaces between words

framing to count words

↳ Stopped there
didn't read or
discuss story

"came up short"
started strong
but didn't get
to book.

↳ often asks "why" encourages
to put their thinking into
words

↳ how often are books
read and discussed? →

↳

goal to
read more
books