

Text-Based Discussions and Functional Grammar Analysis:  
Scaffolding understanding and rich participation for English Language Learners

by

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## DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this dissertation to all of the students out there—from preschoolers to postdocs—who doubt their capabilities enough that school causes them distress instead of bringing them joy. May you find confidence in your abilities, passion for your interests, and teachers who facilitate your learning and nurture your personhood.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation study investigated the potential of Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA), based in systemic functional linguistics, to scaffold English language learners (ELLs) as they participated in text-based discussions (TBDs). Research has shown that ELLs fall behind in reading comprehension achievement, but studies are only beginning to define the best ways to support them in this realm. Studies have found that TBDs offer benefits for student learning, but there are few that focus on ELLs or struggling readers. There is promising research on classroom applications of FGA within literacy instruction, but further study is warranted, particularly with respect to text comprehension and in elementary school settings. This teaching experiment contributes to these three areas of inquiry. A socio-cultural perspective and FGA's linguistic and pedagogical theories provide the theoretical framework. The research questions focus on how FGA can be used to support TBDs, and what affordances and challenges the pedagogy presents. The data come from five units enacted with fourteen fourth-grade ELL students, and consist of the unit plans and my reflections on the design process, the transcribed lessons, and the reflective memos I wrote after each enactment. Data analyses involved repeated reading of the lessons, transcripts, and memos; open-coding for themes within these data; triangulation of findings across data sources; and metacognition about my own thinking as the designer, practitioner, and researcher in every stage of this work. The results speak to how FGA supported the planning of high-quality instruction, how we need to think carefully about supporting students to work in small groups, how FGA language features can facilitate deep text comprehension and rich

metalanguage, and how we should consider the participation of struggling readers during TBDs. I concluded that this is a potentially useful approach for addressing gaps in ELL comprehension instruction, and that the challenges of incorporating FGA into TBDs are not due to anything uniquely problematic about FGA itself, but are faced by many efforts to enrich classroom instruction through work that is novel, complex in content, and atypical in format. Furthermore, I argue that addressing these challenges can benefit students and improve teaching practice.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation describes a teaching experiment that investigated the potential of Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) to support English language learners (ELLs<sup>1</sup>) engaged in text-based discussions (TBDs). There are achievement gaps between ELLs and native speakers with respect to comprehension, but research about the best ways to support ELLs' comprehension is still developing best practices for these students. Research has shown the benefits of discursive approaches to comprehension instruction, but little of this research has focused on ELLs or struggling readers, so the benefits for these groups have not been established. There is promising research on classroom applications of FGA to support literacy instruction, but further study is warranted, particularly with respect to text comprehension and particularly in elementary school settings. This study contributes to these three areas of inquiry.

### Background

Comprehension instruction is an important area of elementary reading instruction. Students who struggle to comprehend text are likely to struggle in many school subjects because of the reading demands associated with content learning. These students can also become caught

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<sup>1</sup> There is debate about the most respectful, yet clear way to talk about students who are dominant in one language and are learning or have learned English as an additional language. In discussing other subgroups of students, researchers have made conscious efforts to talk about the “student with” a certain characteristic (i.e., “students with learning disabilities” or “students with emotional impairment”). There is not an analogously efficient way to talk about these students, so the research community has used “English language learner” (ELL), “English learner” (EL), or “English as a second language” (ESL) learner in various ways. The most frequently used label, for the time being, appears to be English language learner; thus, I use the abbreviation “ELL” in this dissertation.

in a cycle in which the struggle to comprehend affects their motivation to read, leading to less time spent reading, which reduces the opportunity to improve comprehension skills (Stanovich, 1986). Therefore, a focus on comprehension instruction during the elementary years is important for establishing a strong foundation for reading to learn and for pleasure.

Further research on instructional approaches to comprehension instruction is warranted. Despite its instructional importance, many students struggle with text comprehension. The 2011 NAEP data illustrate this. According to these data, only 8% of fourth-graders were successfully able to provide an opinion about the author's craft in a text with supporting details; find and use evidence to support a claim about the central figure in a text; interpret a story to infer a character trait with support from the text; use details from both the beginning and end of a story to describe a change in a character's feelings; infer the reason why a story event is challenging for a character; or use story events to support an opinion about the type of story. More alarming, however, is the fact that 33% of fourth graders scored below the *basic* level, meaning they struggled with tasks such as: providing an evaluation of a story character, making simple inferences regarding the main character's feelings, and making an inference about a character trait (paraphrased NAEP, 2011). Also troubling is the fact that instruction that best prepares students in the primary grades for comprehension and learning later in school is often neglected in favor of less complex instruction (Duke & Block, 2012). These dismal facts about students' struggle with comprehension and the neglect of good instruction to address it keep research on comprehension instruction timely and imperative, even after many decades of intense study.

Comprehension is a multifaceted process, so there are multiple explanations for comprehension struggles. The attributes of the text; the abilities, background knowledge, and experience of the reader; and, the purposes and motivation for the reading activity are all part of

the process. Furthermore, these dynamic factors play out within a complex sociocultural context (Sweet & Snow, 2003). Therefore, comprehension can break down for many reasons (Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden, 2013). For example, students may struggle to construct meaning from the text when their knowledge of topics differs conceptually or in breadth/depth due to varying life experience (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, 1991). Additionally, students can struggle when they come to school with language backgrounds that differ from the standard academic English that is privileged in schooling (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983; Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004). Also, though it is obvious that students who are learning English as a second language are affected by a lack of familiarity with English, it is less recognized that—even as they acquire increasing oral language proficiency with informal language use—the academic language of classroom discussions and texts can remain challenging (Cummins, 1999; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004).

Thus, the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of our classrooms demands more of literacy instruction to support students in making meaning from text (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, 2010a-c). ELLs need instruction that addresses their oral language and academic language development (August & Shanahan, 2006; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, 2010a-c, 2012; Schleppegrell, 2004). Moreover, though the research has established that many of the instructional practices that benefit students who are native English speakers also benefit ELLs (Goldenberg, 2010), this has not been established for comprehension instruction (August & Shanahan, 2006) and ELLs continue to be a group that is at-risk for comprehension difficulties (Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden, 2013). Thus, there are still gaps in our knowledge about how best to support ELLs' literacy instruction, particularly with respect to comprehension.

An important line of research on comprehension instruction has focused on text-based discussions (TBDs). Many researchers have designed and studied approaches for text-based discussions that vary in dimensions such as group size, teacher or student leadership, and narrative or expository text use (e.g., Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Goldenberg, 1993; Great Books Foundation, 1987; Raphael & McMahon, 1994; Sandora, Beck, & McKeown, 1999; Waggoner, Chinn, & Anderson, 1995). Some studies have found evidence that discussions help students to improve their talk and writing about text (e.g., Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001), making discursive approaches a potential resource for addressing the comprehension crisis (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). Moreover, scholars who write about classroom comprehension instruction more broadly still note the important role of discussion. Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman (2011) outline the “essential elements” (p. 52) of this domain of instruction and list “engage students in discussion” (p. 52) as one of them, citing several studies that show the benefits of discussing text with students. Duke and Pearson (2002) focus more on different approaches to strategy instruction—another well-explored and not entirely separate area in comprehension research—but they include “high-quality talk about text” (p. 208) in their description of a supportive classroom context for comprehension instruction, and place text discussion within their framework for balanced comprehension instruction.

Consideration of discursive approaches to comprehension instruction is important for both ELLs, who have been found to spend little time in school engaged in talk (Anthony, 2008; Arreaga-Mayer & Perdomo-Rivera, 1996; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Zhang, Anderson, & Nguyen-Jahiel, 2013), and for struggling readers, who have been found to spend the bulk of their reading instructional time on decoding practice (Allington, 1983). Instead of the skill-and-drill



traditionally offered to these students, we need to design and investigate ways to support them so that they can engage in challenging, authentic literacy tasks (Goatley & Raphael, 1992). It appears that TBDs offer a promising avenue of instruction for both ELLs and struggling readers.

### **Significance of the Study**

Participation in such discussions is important because of the role of language in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1965; Vygotsky & Rieber, 1998). Despite this importance, consideration of how various student subgroups—such as ELLs or struggling readers—make use of classroom discussion is understudied (Certo, Moxley, Reffitt, & Miller, 2010). The research that has been done (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005; Commeyras, Pearson, Ennis, García, & Anderson, 1992; Dugan, 1997; Echevarria, 1995; Echevarria & McDonough, 1995; Goatley, 1996; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Goatley & Raphael, 1992; Hauschildt & McMahon, 1996; Matsumura, Garnier, and Spybrook, 2012; McMahon & Goatley, 1995; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999; Zhang, Anderson, and Nguyen-Jahiel, 2013) proposes ways of scaffolding such students, but has many limitations. For example, some of the work predominantly focuses on general descriptions of participation, rather than specific types of participation that are indicators of deep engagement with the text; some of the work focuses on subgroups with overlapping characteristics (i.e., struggling readers who are ELLs) making it difficult to determine which groups would benefit from the approach; and some of the work uses methodology that makes it difficult to determine what might be helping these students participate, or what benefits they might be gaining. This dissertation study is significant because it examines the discursive participation of ELLs—a group of students who are “disproportionately likely to struggle with reading comprehension” (Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden,

2013, p. 454-5)—as they co-construct arguments during TBDs, addressing a gap in the research. The participants in the study represented a range of comprehension abilities, but all could be expected to benefit from efforts to strengthen their text comprehension; moreover, the study looks closely at the struggling readers in the group, to compare their participation to the other students in order to consider if they are benefitting differently.

In efforts to support ELLs to actively participate in text-based discussions, one potential scaffold is Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA). This technique (based on Halliday's *Systemic Functional Linguistics*) organizes linguistic constructs with a metalanguage that parses language and texts in meaningful units, allowing readers to consider the text at various grain sizes in order to make sense of how the author communicates meaning (Eggins, 2004). FGA has been applied successfully in many classrooms in Australia and is increasingly being used in the United States (Gebhard, 2010). Many of the studies of classroom applications of FGA, however, focus on writing. Considering its use as a support for readers preparing for discussion would add to the scholarship in this area. There is also less work on the application of FGA at the elementary level, adding to the significance of the proposed study. Theoretically, however, using FGA to support text comprehension is a sound line of inquiry. Literacy scholars have provided theoretical and empirical evidence that language and literacy learning are related and mutually reinforce each other (Duke & Carlisle, 2011). Much of this research has looked at phonemic awareness and vocabulary development, however. Exploration of other aspects of language awareness—such as the type FGA describes—would inform this topic further. This study is not designed to empirically prove a causal relationship between FGA instruction and comprehension gains, but it is designed to describe how FGA can be a tool for literacy instruction, and to evaluate the ecological validity of such an approach to TBDs.

Furthermore, the advent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) has triggered a renewed scrutiny of classroom instruction by practitioners, administrators, and researchers. With that scrutiny come efforts to identify instruction that can effectively and efficiently address multiple domains for *all* types of students. Coleman and Goldenberg (2012) point out that the CCSS “give little specific acknowledgement of the challenges for English language learners” (p. 46). They are not only concerned with literacy needs for these students, but the challenges they face across the curriculum:

Content is certainly important, but so are the oral and written language skills necessary to learn and use that content. Mathematics, for example, requires knowing mathematical concepts and skills, and it also requires knowing the language of mathematics—how to use language to learn and discuss operations and proofs and how to understand and demonstrate solutions to mathematical problems. History requires knowing names, events, places, and concepts *and* how to talk or write about them, analyze cause and effect, synthesize and compare explanations for events, and discuss and write about alternative interpretations. Without those oral and written language skills, it is virtually impossible for students to have access to CCSS content. (p. 48)

Wong Fillmore and Fillmore (2012) echo these points, arguing that FGA’s emphasis on the need for students to work with more complex texts can potentially exacerbate the troubles many ELLs face in schools; however, they argue that it is not that ELLs should not work with complex texts, but rather, that they need better support for doing so. In this way, the CCSS may catalyze a new kind of instruction:

Given the language diversity in our schools and in our classrooms, any effort to make the CCSS attainable for these and many other students must go beyond vocabulary, and should begin with an examination of our beliefs about language, literacy and learning. (p. 1)

FGA is an avenue to explore for enhancing best practices and for addressing such gaps in instruction. For example, the English Language Arts standards within the CCSS have a “language” domain that itemizes mastery goals for students concerning understanding and use of

oral and written language. FGA elegantly corresponds to this aspect of the standards because it frames language study as connected to meaning, rather than as isolated tasks, which parallels the CCSS language about the domain:

To build a foundation for college and career readiness in language, students must gain control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. They must also be able to determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening, reading, and media use; come to appreciate that words have nonliteral meanings, shadings of meaning, and relationships to other words; and expand their vocabulary in the course of studying content. **The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from such contexts.** (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/>; bold font added for emphasis)

This study explores the affordances and challenges of an FGA-supported TBD approach within the context of a renewed commitment within the education community to quality literacy instruction across its many domains.

In summary, this teaching experiment took steps to unite the work in three areas of educational research by designing FGA-supported TBD units and enacting them with ELLs. We need to determine best practices for ELL comprehension instruction (August & Shanahan, 2006; Coleman & Goldenberg 2010b; Goldenberg, 2010). A good deal of research exists to support the idea that TBDs can enhance students' text comprehension (Murphy, et al., 2009; Wilkinson & Son, 2011), but little of this work has focused on ELLs or struggling readers (Reninger, 2007). The attention that has been given to how subgroups of learners participate during discussions gives reason to believe that all readers can participate fully (Reninger, 2007), but exploration of specific pedagogical supports to help them do so are sparse. Developing an instructional approach that incorporates new scaffolds for ELLs participating in TBDs will

further this scholarship, particularly during an era of renewed scrutiny of classroom instructional practices.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Two perspectives provide the theoretical foundation for this study. First, a socio-cultural perspective—with its emphasis on the contextualized nature of learning, importance of dialogue, and use of scaffolding—supports the use of text-based discussions for enhancing students’ comprehension of text. Second, pedagogical theories about how Functional Grammar Analysis can support students as they construct meaning from text inform the design of the text-based discussion units in this teaching experiment.

#### **Socio-cultural Theories**

The socio-cultural RAND model of reading comprehension undergirds this study. This model defines reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (RAND, 2002, p. xiii). This model challenges the idea of comprehension as existing between the reader and the text alone. Rather, it includes the different reading purposes as part of the model and, most importantly in a socio-cultural perspective, it situates the text, reader, and activity in the wider socio-cultural context, which includes the proximal reading setting as well as the amalgam of influences from the many backgrounds of the readers involved in the activity.<sup>2</sup> The model supports this study’s assertion that many factors interact to construct meaning from text.

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<sup>2</sup> This perspective compels me to acknowledge that there were many things that I did *not* look at closely as I examined the unit plans and enactments for affordances and challenges; each individual student brought a personal background and prior knowledge to each lesson, and the group as a whole shared a dominant cultural perspective. These backgrounds, perspectives, and knowledge are student resources that influenced some of our conversations. These elements are not often discussed in the results, however, unless they interacted directly with how the FGA pedagogy functioned within this approach. I made the choice to narrow my analysis in this way to keep the scope of

Another significant socio-cultural idea informing this study is that dialogue is important for helping students to construct understanding from text. Vygotsky viewed language as the principal tool for teaching and learning and viewed the conversation between the teacher and learner as integral to coming to a shared understanding of the task or concept (Vygotsky, 1965; Vygotsky & Rieber, 1998). Moreover, in his epistemology Vygotsky saw the young learner's vocalization of what she was learning as so intimately linked to her knowledge that he equated it with thought and characterized learning as an internalization of that language. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) built on this idea when they articulated their theory of teaching. They assert that teachers need to be engaged in conversation with students because "What is spoken *to* the child is later spoken *by* the child to the self, and later is abbreviated and transformed into the silent speech of the child's thought" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 44). The idea supports this study's examination of student participation in TBDs because the meaning that students co-construct through dialogue serves as evidence of their engagement with the text's ideas, and the silence of some students is cause for closer examination of their benefits from this approach.

A final important socio-cultural idea informing this study is that students who struggle (for whatever reason) can be supported. Again, this is expressed by Vygotsky and his theories about the zone of proximal development and scaffolding (Vygotsky & Rieber, 1998; Vygotsky, 1965). Vygotsky characterized teaching as a more knowledgeable other guiding the physical and intellectual work of the learner. This is done most successfully when the work is within the learner's zone of proximal development (ZPD), meaning that the task is not so difficult as to cause frustration, nor so easy as to limit the work to what the student can already do independently. To help a learner perform within his ZPD, a challenging task can be made easier

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the study manageable for both myself and the reader. However, some teachers forget about the personal and cultural resources that students draw on as they make sense of text, so I want to underscore my awareness of this as it threaded throughout our work, even if it is not the focus of this study.

for the learner through the use of scaffolds that support his attempts. The task does not change, but rather the student's expected role in the task is mindfully adjusted (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). As the student improves, these scaffolds fall away or "fade" and new scaffolds are metaphorically erected for the next learning stage. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) explain how this process occurs very naturally in homes between parents and children, but note the fact that assisted performance does not occur in most schools, though it is essentially what teaching is all about. One reason that they cite for this is the typical teacher-to-student ratios in school instructional settings that make intimate observation and response challenging. This idea supports the use of TBDs as settings that are more responsive to students, and encourages this study's exploration of FGA as a scaffold for ELLs.

In summary, we know that some readers experience difficulty with text comprehension. This study proposes that a discursive approach to comprehension instruction can create opportunities for these students to organize, verbalize, and modify their ideas. However, discussing text can also be difficult for some students, so creating scaffolds that help all students participate adds to the instructional menu. If the discursive task of a TBD is out of the students' zones of proximal development because of language proficiency or reading abilities, such scaffolds are needed to facilitate their participation in discussions, allowing them to reap the benefits of TBDs. FGA is one possibility for such scaffolding.

### **Functional Grammar Theories**

Halliday's *Systemic Functional Linguistics* is "a theory about how language makes meaning" (Schleppegrell, 2007, p. 122) and undergirds FGA theories asserting that students can examine language in order to become stronger readers and writers (Martin & Rose, 2007; Schleppegrell, 2004). SFL characterizes the relationship between context and spoken/written

discourse such that linguistic regularity connects the two in predictable “genres” (Martin & Rose, 2008). Often these genres are so common that we have unconsciously internalized the stages (i.e., the “price” stage in a retail transaction genre, in which the cashier informs the customer of the total amount owed) and grammar (i.e., the “*That will be four dollars even*”). We only become aware of them when something breaks the expectations (Eggins, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2007, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2004). FGA proposes that becoming conscious of these linguistic regularities and their purposes, however, takes students more deeply into the text and supports their exploration of the complexity and creative nature of language.

FGA begins with the SFL theory that discourse consists of a set of choices made in order to accomplish a communicative goal (Eggins, 2004). Language is used to realize different discursive metafunctions in social activity, packing multiple meanings into a single text. The interpersonal metafunction enacts relationships, the ideational metafunction represents experiences, and the textual metafunction organizes texts (Eggins, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2007, 2008). These metafunctions realize the tenor, field, and mode of the text, respectively. We interpret all three of these meanings in a text, constructing understanding out of multiple-but-overlapping meanings. The author’s linguistic choices draw on these different meanings and more or less effectively realize the communicative goal. Being confused about any of these meanings—because they are realized ineffectively or because one is unfamiliar with the language—can hinder text comprehension (Eggins, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004).

Awareness of these linguistic features has the potential to enhance comprehension, particularly in genres unfamiliar to the reader (Schleppegrell, 2004). Colombi (2009) describes such a functional approach as a “pedagogy focused on the text in terms of content while attending to how the lexicogrammatical features of the text help in the very realization of textual



content” (p. 43). Exploration and discussion of these genres and lexical features that realize different meanings allow readers to view text with a consciousness of the author’s choices, which can serve to highlight the organization, important ideas, and subtle messages of the text.

Additionally, a pedagogically useful terminology exists that provides meaningful labels for different features of language and facilitates a metalanguage. This metalanguage allows those studying language to talk about it in efficient and meaningful ways (Schleppegrell, 2004). FGA selects and labels text in ways that differ from traditional grammar, preserving the meaning of the words or phrases in the context of the text. Therefore, analysis activities use meaningful segments of text, parsed such that the metalanguage represents meaningful wholes and labels them according to their function in a sentence (Eggins, 2004).<sup>3</sup>

It is my position that empirical research exploring how FGA can support discursive approaches to comprehension instruction is needed. Because of its focus on language, ELLs—who are in need of better comprehension instruction—may benefit from this scaffold. Furthermore, TBD research needs to focus attention on specific subgroups of learners, to make sure all students are benefiting from this approach. Additionally, FGA researchers have paid less attention to comprehension and discursive outcomes than to writing outcomes. This study contributes to all three areas of scholarship.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This teaching experiment had two purposes that contribute to the literature on comprehension instruction for ELLs, the literature on text-based discussions (TBDs), and the literature on Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA). The first purpose was to develop and enact

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<sup>3</sup> More explanation of the FGA pedagogy and metalanguage is in Chapter 2.

an instructional approach to TBDs that offers language support for ELLs through FGA. The most prominent approaches to TBDs in the literature focus on deepening conceptual understandings and/or establishing a critical eye toward the text. This study's approach, however, focused on the language features of the text to structure text analysis for the students. The approach used a small-group discussion setting that synthesized the text analyses conducted by pairs and threesomes, resulting in co-constructed understandings of the texts' meanings and exploration of *how* the texts mean what they do linguistically. The second purpose of this teaching experiment was to consider the affordances and challenges of this instructional approach. Instruction benefits from a close look at the learning opportunities provided for students. Consideration of the successes and struggles of both the teacher and the students sheds light on these opportunities, offering future researchers and practitioners valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional approach. This study describes the affordances and challenges of using FGA in a TBD instructional context, during both the planning and enactment stages of instruction. This allows such instruction to be mindfully designed for specific contexts and improved through iterative processes.

Through these purposes, and because this has not been studied before, this work serves as a starting point for research on how to incorporate FGA into TBDs. Two principal questions drove the design of this study:

- Q.1. How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?
- Q.2. What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?

This study used a descriptive design in which two groups of heterogeneous (with respect to reading comprehension) fourth-grade ELLs participated in text-based discussions of narrative

texts supported by Functional Grammar Analysis. The students participated in discussions informed by the pedagogical practices highlighted in the literature on TBDs, but were further supported by an instructional design that capitalized on FGA's pedagogical practices and metalanguage. Analysis of the developed lesson plans, post-enactment memos, and lesson transcripts inform a description of the resulting FGA-supported TBDs.

In Chapter 2, I will review the literature that informed different aspects of this study. In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodology, including the overall study design and the details of participants, materials, and procedures. In Chapters 4 through 7, I will report and discuss the results of the four foci of the study: the planning process, the pair/threesome work, the use of FGA terminology and metalanguage, and the structure of the TBDs and associated student participation. Chapter 8 will synthesize these results through a discussion of the FGA-supported TBD unit as a whole.

## **CHAPTER 2: FOUNDATIONS IN THE LITERATURE**

This section will review scholarship on the three principal features of the proposed study: Text-based discussions (TBDs), comprehension instruction for English language learners (ELLs), and pedagogical applications of Functional Grammar (FG). First, I review research on the effectiveness of TBDs for student learning and use empirical work to illustrate the use of TBDs with specific populations of struggling readers. My intent is to orient the reader to the fact that different TBD approaches exist, have been shown to be variously effective across different outcome measures, and have benefited from the use of different scaffolds to support particular students. Second, I review research that focuses on literacy instruction for ELLs, one of the specific populations that often struggle with comprehension. My intent is to orient the reader to what we know about good literacy instruction for ELLs, and to highlight studies that are exploring instruction to promote comprehension specifically. Third, I describe the FGA pedagogy and present different ways it has been implemented in instructional settings. My intent is to familiarize the reader with FGA's developing approaches to instruction, and to point to gaps in this body of literature that are addressed, in part, by this dissertation study. This dissertation study ties these areas of research together by using FGA-supported TBDs to engage ELLs with texts.

## **Text-Based Discussions and Struggling Comprehenders**

Educational research on reading comprehension began with the development of models for comprehension processes and comparisons of strong and poor comprehenders that served to identify differences in their reading behaviors. This research was then used in different “waves” (Pressley, 1998) of pedagogical design efforts that became progressively more complex. The resulting pedagogies primarily focus on explicit strategy instruction and/or text-based discussions.

### **Background on Studies of TBDs and Student Learning**

The literature offers many TBD approaches that vary in group size, teacher and student roles, and targeted text types (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). Some examples are *Grand Conversations* (Cobb & Rusher, 1996; Crafton & Johnson, 2008; Eeds & Wells, 1989), *Book Club* (McMahon, Pardo, & Raphael, 1991; Raphael & McMahon, 1994; Raphael, McMahon, Goatley, Bentley, Boyd, & Pardo, 1992), *Questioning the Author* (QtA; Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy 1996; McKeown, Beck, & Worthy, 1993; Sandora, Beck, & McKeown, 1999), *Junior Great Books* (Criscuola, 1994; Feiertag & Chernoff, 1987; Howard, 1984, 1986; Nichols, 1992; Wheelock, 1999), *Collaborative Reasoning* (CR; Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Waggoner, Chinn, Anderson, & Yi, 1995) and *Instructional Conversations* (ICs; Goldenberg, 1993; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Saunders, Patthey-Chavez, & Goldenberg, 1997). Many of these designs have their roots in socio-cognitive or socio-cultural theories about the importance of dialogue in the learning process (Murphy, et al, 2009; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). The various approaches also have different learning goals for

the work; for instance, some center on specific types of student participation, others on students' text comprehension (Murphy, et al., 2009).

Tracking the research trajectory on comprehension instruction, Wilkinson and Son (2011) were interested in what they call a “dialogic turn in research on learning and teaching of reading comprehension” (p. 361). They gathered over 60 reviews and meta-analyses of research on reading comprehension instruction, and then searched for additional journal-published empirical work on reading comprehension instruction in K-12 settings. They incorporated some of this work into Pressley's (1998) three waves of comprehension instruction (referenced above), then proposed a fourth wave that they call “dialogic,” which includes instruction focused on content-rich instruction, argumentation, intertextuality, and discussion. Much of their handbook chapter is focused on the use of dialogic instruction as an answer to some problems with strategy instruction (a topic outside of the focus of this dissertation study), and three sections focus on forms of dialogic instruction that are not typically considered TBD approaches. Nonetheless, their section on text discussion in this chapter is informative for this study, and offers background for the reader.

Wilkinson and Son (2011) define TBDs as “discourse-intensive pedagogies that disrupt the I-R-E (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) pattern of traditional classroom discourse in favor of more open-ended, collaborative exchanges of ideas among participants for the purpose of improving students' understanding and interpretation of texts” (p. 369). They explain that the way to distinguish one TBD approach from another is to consider two aspects: the degree of control of the teacher versus the student, and the dominant stance of the discussion toward the text. The degree of control concerns issues of turn-taking, text selection, interpretive authority, and other aspects that shape the parameters of the discussion. These aspects influence who talks

and when, and how those contributions are taken up by others. The stance, which is related to the degree of control in many ways, concerns the teacher's goals for the discussion. Different researchers use different labels (and the meta-analysis described below will offer examples), but in general terms, the stance determines whether the goal is recall and inference regarding the facts, events and details in the text; personal response to the ideas and themes in the text; or evaluative critique of the text. Some TBDs take more than one stance in their work with text. Despite calling for additional research on TBDs—to address methodological limitations and a lack of work with informational texts—Wilkinson and Son (2011) acknowledge “a convergence of theory and data suggesting that high-quality discussions can improve students' comprehension” (p. 371).

One source of their data was a study conducted to synthesize the quantitative findings of this large body of research. Interested in the use of classroom discussion to foster “high-level comprehension of text” (Murphy, et al., 2009, p. 741), Murphy and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of the plethora of discussion approaches in the literature to examine which ones showed effects on student comprehension and learning. They called it a theoretically-supported “presupposition” (p. 759) to assert that discussions about text enhance student comprehension and sought to comb through the approximately 300 manuscripts on the topic to assess the effects of such approaches on student comprehension and thinking. They looked at research in which the classroom discussion centered on a specific text, and included only empirical studies reporting quantitative results that enabled the calculation of effect sizes. Additionally, the outcome measures had to focus on a construct of interest for the meta-analysis: teacher and/or student talk; various types of comprehension; and critical thinking and reasoning behaviors,

argumentation, and meta-cognition. The authors defined the four types of comprehension outcomes that were assessed in these studies as follows:

*text-explicit comprehension* (i.e., comprehension requiring information that is explicitly stated, usually within a sentence), *text-implicit comprehension* (i.e., comprehension requiring integration of information across sentences, paragraphs, or pages), *scriptally implicit comprehension* (i.e., comprehension requiring considerable use of prior knowledge in combination with information in text), and *general or unspecified comprehension*, in which the nature of the comprehension was unclear (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). (Murphy, et al., 2009, p. 744)

Their data consisted of 42 studies made up of nine discussion approaches present in the published peer-reviewed research:<sup>4</sup>

Collaborative Reasoning (CR; Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998), Paideia Seminar (PS; Billings & Fitzgerald, 2002), Philosophy for Children (P4C; Sharp, 1995), Instructional Conversations (IC; Goldenberg, 1993), Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry (JGB; Great Books Foundation, 1987), Questioning the Author (QtA; Beck & McKeown, 2006; McKeown & Beck, 1990), Book Club (BC; Raphael & McMahon, 1994), Grand Conversations (GC; Eeds & Wells, 1989), and Literature Circles (LC; Short & Pierce, 1990). (p. 742)

They categorized each approach into one of three stances based on the approach's goals and purposes. Critical-analytic approaches (which promote a subjective, critical eye during reading and encourage readers' questions) included Collaborative Reasoning, Paideia Seminars, and Philosophy for Children. Efferent approaches (which stress the retrieval and retention of information in the text) included Instructional Conversations, Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry, and Questioning the Author. Expressive approaches (which favor readers' spontaneous text connections and affective responses to the text) included Book Club, Grand Conversations, and Literature Circles. This categorization offers context for the results of the meta-analysis in that it reminds readers that different discussion approaches have different goals for students and their engagement with text.

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<sup>4</sup> I chose to quote the article here to preserve the citations that these authors associate with each approach, as opposed to the citations I have chosen to attribute to approaches I have mentioned or will mention. In this block quote, all references are as cited in the meta-analysis (Murphy, et al., 2009).



The results of this meta-analysis support the further study of various TBDs. The researchers found that specific TBD approaches produced specific outcomes, reporting that:

[M]any of the approaches were highly effective at promoting students' literal and inferential comprehension, especially those that we categorized as more efferent in nature, and that relatively few of the approaches were particularly effective at promoting students' critical thinking, reasoning, and argumentation about and around text. (p. 759)

Within the stance categories, however, the specific approaches varied on outcome measures. For example, there were strong improvements in amounts of student talk and in the reduction of teacher talk in Collaborative Reasoning, Instructional Conversations, and Literature Circles. Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry showed moderate to strong effects on both text-explicit and text-implicit comprehension measures, and on critical thinking and reasoning measures. QtA showed weak effects for general comprehension, but strong effects for text-explicit and text-implicit comprehension, and very strong effects for critical thinking and reasoning measures. Literature Circles produced moderate effects on unspecified comprehension and very strong effects on scriptally implicit comprehension. Grand Conversations showed only moderate effects on text-implicit comprehension. These findings highlight that each approach has different strengths.

Further illustrating the different outcomes for different approaches, the researchers investigated the variability in effect sizes for the available multi-group studies with comprehension measures<sup>5</sup> with random-effects modeling. They assessed two random-effects models, one of which attributed variability to discussion approach, and the other of which attributed it to the type of comprehension assessed. They concluded that the variance-by-discussion-approach was the better model because the comprehension assessments were confounded with the study and discussion approach variables: "As such, we conclude that

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<sup>5</sup> These included only Collaborative Reasoning, Philosophy for Children, Questioning the Author, Instructional Conversation, Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry, and Literature Circles.

approach statistically and conceptually accounts for maximum variance in comprehension effect sizes across the reviewed studies” (p. 759). Such conclusions about the variance and the approach-specific student outcomes results point to the complexity of studying TBDs and warrant further study of specific TBD approaches, since not all approaches produce the same outcomes.

That said, the meta-analysis did report informative and complex findings about the TBDs in general, beyond outcomes by stance or approach. It considered the length of time students participated in the TBD work and found that longer studies produced bigger increases in student talk and decreases in teacher talk. In contrast, for general comprehension the largest effect sizes existed for studies lasting less than four weeks and decreased for studies lasting longer. Furthermore, moderate effect sizes hit a “ceiling” at 24 weeks for text-explicit and text-implicit comprehension and were negligible after that point.<sup>6</sup> Again, such results should spur additional study on TBDs to develop theoretical explanations for such empirical findings.

With respect to the link between TBDs and comprehension, the study points to many challenges faced in this work. First, though the researchers found that most of the approaches were effective at increasing student talk and decreasing teacher talk, these changes were unrelated to comprehension outcomes, thus challenging the somewhat common practice of using talk as a proximal indicator for comprehension outcomes. Second, the researchers found smaller effect sizes when studies used multi-group designs and when standardized measures of comprehension were used. This raises questions about which methodological choices most accurately represent and effectively measure the work being done in TBDs, and whether those criteria are in tension at all.

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<sup>6</sup> The researchers note that these results come from cross-sectional data and should be interpreted with some caution (Murphy et al., 2009).

These results also point to the way different subgroups of students overlap in this research. Interestingly, the results showed more benefit for students of below-average ability participating in TBDs than for students of average or above-average ability, “possibly due to the fact that students of higher ability levels already possess the skills needed to comprehend narrative text” (p. 760). Adding to this point, the authors note that “most of the respondents across the various studies attended schools in urban settings and were characterized as having low socioeconomic backgrounds. As such, the aggregate outcomes seem to represent the effects one might expect for a sample pool of relatively poor, ethnically diverse, 11-year old students with low to average reading ability” (p. 761). The relationships between our nation’s SES levels, ethnic groups, and school achievement trends result in complicated outcomes to interpret. The following example from the literature is illustrative.

ICs are a prominent TBD approach with statistically-significant evidence of their effectiveness (e.g., Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999); the researchers who study this approach designed it and study it primarily with ELLs, so I will discuss more of their work in the next section. Important for this section, however, is that Murphy and colleagues (Murphy, et al., 2009) note in their findings that “ICs are particularly effective at helping these struggling readers better comprehend narrative texts” (p. 755). Note that there is a lot of overlap of various subgroups of students in these conclusions. Because IC researchers work in school contexts, the SES-language relationship in our country and the SES-achievement relationship in our schools result in an additional IC focus on many students who are struggling readers. Further complicating conclusions, a study by Saunders and Goldenberg (1999) found that the beneficial effects of participating in ICs (combined with working with “literature logs” in some conditions)

varied according to language status (fluent versus limited-proficiency<sup>7</sup>). Thus, in studying just one TBD approach, we can consider results in terms of various subgroups of students: ELLs with varying levels of English proficiency, students from low-SES backgrounds, and students who struggle with reading. Therefore, it is important to interpret the results of all TBD studies—quantitative or qualitative—with the complexities of these variables mind.

Finally, in their discussion of the results, Murphy and colleagues (Murphy, et al., 2009) point out that some approaches were not included because of a lack of quantitative data for use in the meta-analysis. They make the point that “a lack of quantitative data does not imply that the aforementioned approaches failed to affect students’ comprehension of text. It merely indicates that quantitative data relative to these constructs of interest was not assessed in the reviewed studies” (p. 756). I would add that some of the approaches included in this study are examined in other qualitative studies in the literature, with results not included in this meta-analysis. Therefore, a look at some of these other studies is informative.

### **Qualitative Studies of TBD Work with Struggling Readers**

In this presentation of some of the qualitative research on TBDs, I am choosing to highlight studies that focus on the use of TBDs with students who are struggling readers for three reasons. First, I am exploring the use of a specific scaffold (FGA) in this dissertation study. The literature that focuses on struggling readers speaks more to the scaffolding built into specific TBD approaches *and* often describes additional scaffolding that can be incorporated into a TBD. Second, there is still reason to closely examine how struggling readers make use of TBDs, which I do in this dissertation study (Reninger, 2007). Although Murphy and colleagues (Murphy, et al., 2009) point out that “the vast majority of the respondents in the reviewed studies were

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<sup>7</sup> “Fluent” does not just refer to native speakers, but also to ELLs who have progressed to this level on standardized language tests.

described by study authors as average (23.8%) or below average (19.0%) in academic ability” (p. 752), in a data set consisting of 42 studies across nine TBD approaches, those percentages do not indicate that this topic has been exhaustively examined. Additional research is informative, and the qualitative nature of the work included here offers a different lens on these students. Third, it is important to “see” the struggling readers in this line of research. Although many studies work with students who might be below average in reading skills, much of the scholarship reports on whole classes or heterogeneous small groups without juxtaposing the experiences of different subgroups of learners. This is problematic because it is possible that certain students—namely those who comprehend text with relative ease—are able to make use of TBDs in a more effective way than other students. Their success might empirically hide the struggle of other students in this context. This qualitative work that focuses on struggling readers, however, examines these struggles in detail.

This qualitative research offers additional evidence that discussion can help students to think and talk about text, but it reminds us that students who struggle may need special scaffolds in order to make the best use of such discussions. Furthermore, there is consensus among these researchers that TBDs are a needed contrast to reductionistic skill-based instruction for such students.

Echevarria (1995) wanted to examine alternative approaches to the usually reductionistic reading instruction offered to students with learning disabilities, and she pursued this focus through the use of Instructional Conversations, which I mentioned briefly in the previous section. ICs are TBDs designed for use with ELLs. They support ELL text comprehension through an emphasis on building up background knowledge before reading, and on oral language practice and comprehension fostering through extensive discussion of a text’s literal and thematic

meanings. IC teachers are extensively trained in how to promote discussion, thematically drive the work, and build background knowledge for students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Echevarria's study examined student participation in ICs juxtaposed against their participation in traditional basal lessons. It worked with five second- and third-grade students with learning disabilities. Five traditional basal lessons and five IC lessons were conducted in a counterbalanced manner, all with basal texts. The usual teacher of the self-contained special education classroom, who had been trained in ICs and participated in them for two years, delivered instruction. The study did not modify the ICs in any way for these struggling students, but rather conducted them as they would for typical students. The researcher held the time, location, and seating arrangement of the lessons constant in an attempt to control for as much as possible since matching the students on the various dimensions of their ability levels was not possible.

The outcome measures came from detailed discourse analysis of post-reading interview responses to "You have just finished reading a story. Now, tell me the whole story" and "Now I have some questions about the story Mrs. McDonald read" (p. 541). Responses to these questions were evaluated for literal accuracy and number of proposed ideas, and to see whether students used the text to support answers, used complete sentences, and used complex language forms. For three of the students, the researcher and two blind raters additionally studied their videotaped participation to document and rate student contributions during the lessons according to relevance and self-initiation. The outcome measures were categorized as proximal (amount of self-initiated participation; higher-level discourse) and distal (post lesson narrative recall; literal recall) with respect to the TBD. The results showed higher-quality participation and higher-level discourse (proximal measures) during ICs, but no difference in literal comprehension or post

lesson narrative retellings of the story (distal measures). Echevarria points out that this implies one of three possibilities: the proximal outcomes may not feed directly into the distal outcomes; the distal outcomes may not be measured well in this study; or the students' previous exposure to ICs caused changes in the distal outcomes before the study was conducted. These results, however, remind us of Murphy and colleagues' (Murphy, et al., 2009) point that changes in participation have yet to be linked with changes on comprehension measures. This was the case here, even when the comprehension measures were designed by the researcher.

This study does not offer anything in the way of additional scaffolding for these students; in fact, part of the point was to see how students with learning disabilities would take up typically-structured ICs. However, ICs themselves have scaffolding features, most notably a strong thematic focus and a pre-reading discussion that primes and/or provides background knowledge on the text topic, as well as teacher discourse moves that encourage certain types of participation through modeling.

Echevarria and McDonough (1995) continued with this line of inquiry that examined the use of ICs in special education settings. The researchers conducted the study in a self-contained special education classroom serving students ranging from six to ten years old with a variety of learning challenges.<sup>8</sup> The data collection lasted a year and a half, so the exact class composition changed as students were added and removed from special education services, but the special education teacher conducted ICs at least once a week with eight to ten students. The researchers conducted sixteen classroom visits and seventeen teacher interviews, providing the bulk of the data. Lessons were videotaped and transcribed when necessary for further analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> "The majority of the students were classified by the schools as learning disabled or mildly mentally retarded. Other disabilities represented included students labeled language delayed, hearing impaired, and multiply handicapped (including mental and physical disabilities)" (Echevarria & McDonough, 1995, p. 110).

Qualitative analysis revealed three themes in these data. First, ICs promoted oral participation and student-to-student interaction, which were language development opportunities for the students. Students didn't have to raise their hands to speak and didn't have to find "right" answers to the open-ended questions used in ICs. The teacher's efforts to stay quiet at times and to remain flexible enough in the lesson to be responsive to student contributions also promoted this participation. The teacher also modeled using the text and defending a position for students during these lessons. Second, ICs provided a holistic context for learning, not the reductionistic context usually provided for struggling readers. Rather than breaking the reading task into parts, reading the text and having discussion went on concurrently, providing a holistic context for the co-construction of meaning. This also facilitated use of the text as evidence for points made in the discussion. More importantly, it provided students in a special education setting with reading experiences tied to thematic exploration, rather than reduced into component skill study. Third, the ICs required adaptations to assist learners with special needs. The thematic choice for the lesson couldn't be too abstract or students struggled to engage with it, but the researchers also caution that they don't endorse mundane themes for these learners either. Similarly, the questions needed to avoid too much abstraction and tap into background experiences the students could draw from, but they also couldn't be too simplistic or they would not provoke talk. Finally, behavior management demanded added scaffolds, such as "talking chips" to manage dominating students and visual representation of student contributions to help students stay attentive to each other. The teacher also had to adjust the length of some segments of the IC to accommodate widely varying reading levels in decisions about who would read the text aloud. Finally, the teacher had to prompt and encourage students more in order to overcome a "history of failure" (Echevarria & McDonough, 1995, p. 118).



In this study, the researchers used transcript data to support their findings, helping the scaffolds they discuss come to life through real student talk. Work like this is helpful for the practical work of teaching because we get a sense of what ICs sound like with struggling readers, and a concrete image of how the considerations, adjustments, and scaffolds played out in this TBD.

Dugan (1997) offers similar data in a description of options for scaffolding the comprehension of struggling readers in a TBD. The author reminds us that many approaches to teaching narratives use a quiz style and relegate the work of poor comprehenders to the study of surface features of the text. She juxtaposes this with the different expectations of *transactional literature discussions* (TLDs), which involve shared reading and writing, discussion, and drama. The discussion component of this approach is not focused on basic recall of the text; rather, “talk sessions are opportunities for students and teachers to share their wonderings, report to one another, and jointly construct understandings” (p. 89). The descriptive study worked with sixteen- to twelve-year old struggling readers, meeting for forty-five-minute TLD sessions twice each week for eight weeks. Qualitative analysis of the data showed struggling readers participating productively by referring to the text and expressing aesthetic responses, and Dugan asserts that engaging in discussion led to improved exploration of the narrative text. Furthermore, students expressed enjoyment of the activities and noted that they were unusual classroom practices.

Dugan emphasizes the scaffolding built in to support students’ discussion of text, citing the TLD framework that includes predictable routines of reading, talking, and writing; an “RQL2” heuristic that reminds students how to participate through Responding, Questioning, Listening, and Linking; teacher modeling of sense-making activities during discussion; teacher

responses to student contributions; writing during and after reading; and students' partner reading and sharing of writing. Important to theoretical considerations of scaffolding, Dugan notes that these scaffolds are allowed to adjust and dissolve at different rates for different students.

Book Club researchers have also spent time studying students who struggle with reading. Goatley and Raphael (1992) were interested in how special education students in a resource room would respond to the authentic, discussion-based pedagogy endorsed for mainstream rooms. They, too, were critical of the reductionistic approaches of many resource rooms: "Reductionistic views stem from the idea that reading is made up of a set of subskills and that reading development for students with learning problems is most effective when these skills are learned prior to engaging in the more complex, higher-order thinking that characterizes mature literate persons" (p. 313). These ideas, they argue, result in a curriculum that is highly-controlled and focused on literal-level understanding. Although beneficial in some respects, it limits critical thinking opportunities. The researchers selected five third- through fifth-grade students with various learning struggles who received their daily reading instruction in the resource room. Twice weekly, these students met with a researcher to participate in Book Club for six weeks. The study was focused on increasing student understanding of how and what to discuss in the TBD, and the data gathered included field notes from the classroom before the Book Club intervention, a pre-post performance-based measure, a metacognitive writing interview, transcripts of discussions and interviews, and students' written work.

The researchers qualitatively analyzed this data, triangulating their interpretations across the many sources, and found evidence of the intervention's influence on students. They offered transcript data illustrating how the nature of the discussions changed from the typical classroom

format to one that was more conversational. Students began responding to each other more and valuing the importance of questioning, exhibited by asking good questions and responding to each other's questions. In the typical resource room context, students did not often respond to each other or talk extensively. Additionally, in the student writing, there is evidence of deeper engagement with the text. When responding in writing to questions about what they liked about the story, students went from simply saying they liked the story in the pre-intervention reading log activity, to writing about events or themes in the story to support their opinions in the post-intervention reading log activity. The researchers noted areas of struggle that persisted throughout the intervention, however, such as including all members in the discussion, going beyond literal references to the text to make connections, and responding aesthetically to the text.

This study shows progress in students who are often left out of such discursive reading instruction. The researchers note how they used writing activities, graphic organizers, and instructor support during these activities to scaffold the students' participation in productive ways. However, the remaining struggles also show that these students have areas of particular difficulty that merit the consideration of additional scaffolding.

Continuing with this work, Goatley, Brock, and Raphael (1995) conducted a study in which they used discussion transcripts to analyze the different ways fifth graders participated in a three-week Book Club within a diverse group that "consisted of 3 students who qualified for special services (i.e., Chapter 1, learning disabilities, second language learner), a mix of boys and girls, and a range of ability levels, cultural backgrounds, and amount of experience in Book Club" (p. 359). The researchers collected data on students' perceived roles in Book Club, gathered their written work in response to text, and documented the Book Club sessions and other classroom activities through video and field notes. The research questions were concerned

with the nature of students' participatory behaviors and meaning construction processes within the group. The analyses show the different ways students participated with respect to number of turns of talk and their individual modes of participation, as well as how these individual participation profiles interacted as student negotiated for turns of talk. The researchers note that all students—"notably even those who traditionally would not have access to such activities" (p. 366)—participated in the discussions in some way, though the specifics differed greatly across students. The next analyses focused on how these interactions facilitated the group meaning-making process. They found evidence of students using the discussion to clarify confusing parts of the text, and using multiple sources of information (e.g., the book, peers, the teacher) to construct their understandings.

The researchers connect their findings to two social constructivist notions that are important to theories undergirding TBDs. First, they emphasize that the use of language is key in these meaning construction and learning opportunities, and point out the absence of rich talk in the skill-and-drill, oral quizzing, or worksheet activities that predominate in the pull-out settings many struggling students experience. Second, they point out that students relied often on more knowledgeable others, which is a resource that is also more accessible when a group is working together to co-construct meaningful understandings than when students work on seatwork or participate in quiz-like, turn-taking participation structures.

The previous study described how each student in the diverse group had his/her own participation profile, influenced by a web of contextual factors. Goatley (1996) continued with this line of work by focusing on one of these students more particularly, to explore specifically whether research-endorsed practices work the same way for struggling readers. This case study investigates the experience of a special education student—Stark (a pseudonym)—in a regular

education literacy instruction setting and focuses on his participation and the supports provided for him by the teacher. The setting was the same as the previous study: a fifth-grade classroom participating in small group Book Club discussions facilitated by the classroom teacher. The study describes the gradual progression of Stark's awareness of group norms and ability to subscribe to them, and the teacher's awareness of his capabilities, patience in letting him grow, and willingness to let him participate in sometimes unconventional ways. The conclusion of this analysis, like the larger Goatley, Brock and Raphael (1995) study, is that special education students can learn and participate in mainstream settings, but also require special supports to do so effectively. This study adds a temporal dimension, emphasizing that scaffolds assist struggling readers, but these students also need extra time to learn both content and practices.

In another example, a researcher and practitioner pair (who were not involved in the development of the Book Club approach, unlike the other Book Club studies discussed here) describe a specific scaffold used to help struggling readers participate in the TBD. Paxton-Buursma and Walker (2007) explain their efforts to broaden the instructional approaches used with students with disabilities in the school resource room. The seven students in the study participated in daily Book Club meetings lasting 40-50 minutes. The authors note that "the flexible design of Book Club allows a teacher to adapt or tailor tools to meet student needs" (p. 30) and they discuss the scaffolding student participation in terms of "tools." The tools served to give students greater access to discussions, to guide appropriate communicative behavior, and to foster certain learning goals (such as a specific strategy use or connecting to other student turns of talk). This article focuses on the tool called "piggybacking" (p. 30). They describe how this tool worked in discussions: "Piggybacking occurs when students expand, elaborate, and extend an idea or clarify an initial idea. The piggybacked responses create a relationship between a

student's words and a previous utterance often relaying an experience or feeling of the discussant" (p. 30). The use of the term "piggyback" cued students to listen to each other and link their ideas with what's been previously said in the discussion.

Research with such a specific focus complements the studies that speak more broadly of scaffolding. Like the previously-discussed work, the conclusions in this article emphasize how mindful use and assessment of scaffolds can help students who struggle with reading make more use of discursive formats for reading comprehension, such as Book Club. Through describing and illustrating a particular scaffold, however, the researchers share the ideas behind the scaffold as well, and ways to teach students about it, assess its implementation, and fade it when necessary.

This work shows that struggling readers can benefit from participation in TBDs and describes some of the scaffolding that helps such students participate more fully. It also exemplifies findings we can learn from qualitative work that are helpful for informing practice and instructional design, but can get lost in quantitative studies. A final example reinforces ideas about scaffolding struggling readers, but explicitly highlights the way different methodologies offer us different insights in the study of TBDs.

Commeyras, Pearson, Ennis, Garcia, and Anderson (1992) explored reading instruction that promotes critical thinking through dialogic-learning lessons (a predecessor of Collaborative Reasoning lessons). They were critical both of schooling that does not emphasize critical thinking skills and of the lack of research on effective methods for promoting such skills. The study examined the impact of involving seven eleven- and twelve- year-old students with learning disabilities (defined by performance of one SD below peers on standardized achievement test) in ten dialogic-learning lessons. Seven other students with learning disabilities

served as a comparison group. In the dialogic-learning lessons, students read a story and were led by the principal investigator to consider the evidence for two hypothesized conclusions one could draw from the story. The study highlights some scaffolding activities and behaviors. For example, preceding this discussion, students read one page at a time and informally discussed it as a group. The first author states: “I asked them to share their understanding of the text, and I tried to ensure that they understood the most significant aspects of the story to prepare them for the discussion” (p. 4). The subsequent discussion asked students to take a side on the issue and generate evidence for each side, which students then evaluated for truth and relevance; to scaffold the focus on critical thinking skills, the amount of evidence was eventually limited to three assertions per side, and more time was spent on evaluating that evidence. Additionally, the first author noted the struggle students had with understanding the text and how her construction of one text into a play was so successful with respect to the students’ enthusiasm, she continued implementing this scaffold for the remainder of the study.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis to examine the nature of participation in dialogic-learning lessons, to describe the pedagogical strategies that promoted critical thinking, and to test whether these sessions actually promoted critical thinking and/or augmented reading performance. Qualitative analysis of the discussions showed students seeking and providing reasons for and clarification about events and details in the texts, reading the text and chalkboard work aloud, and breaking from typical I-R-E patterns of classroom discourse (see Cazden, 1988). The study also lists pedagogical strategies implemented to support these students: stimulating student involvement through questions to the group, leading students to consult the text, providing clarification, and becoming a participant in the discussions. Quantitative analysis of scores on the reading measure for the instructional and

comparison groups showed no main effects between groups, but the principal investigator (who was also the instructor) contests these results, using transcript data to show students actually understood basic ideas from the text that they responded to incorrectly on the quantitative measure. Quantitative analysis of pre-post scores on the critical thinking measure for the instructional group showed no change in critical thinking skills, and most students scored poorly. The primary investigator conducted follow-up interviews with students about their answers on this measure and found two validity problems with the measure. First, students were answering with “streetwise” critical thinking by conflating their own background knowledge with what was stated in the scenarios they were analyzing. Second, students offered valid reasoning for incorrect answers, revealing holes in the presumed logic of the measure. Another qualitative measure analyzed pre- and post-dialogic-learning discussion, evaluating whether students improved in identifying valid reasons for their individual stances and evaluating the relevance of various reasons generated by the group. These data show no change in identifying valid reasons, but significant improvement in evaluating group-generated reasons. Qualitative analysis of these data also show the instructional group working more cooperatively in evaluating reasons than the comparison group, who supported reasoning based on friendships and social criteria.

This study offers specific scaffolding that can be offered to struggling readers, but the results are further evidence that the study of TBDs poses methodological challenges. Measuring comprehension and student thinking is complex methodological territory, and though quantitative measures are appealing for offering clear validation of a TBD approach, they are vulnerable to blind spots with respect to students’ construction of meaning which are often captured through qualitative data. This study’s results remind us that both quantitative and qualitative data offer information, but of different natures.



The literature presented here supports this dissertation study's further research on TBDs, and its focus on scaffolding specific students to participate. We need to ask how students with various challenges can be supported to get the most out of discussions because all students deserve to take part in TBDs. It is inappropriate to have students participate if they are not supported in their efforts to "[engage] in the more complex, higher-order thinking that characterizes mature literate persons (Goatley & Raphael, 1992, p. 313). Mere presence in the group is not sufficient. It is an educational responsibility to consider different learners in different formats and the scaffolds they might need (Hauschildt & McMahon, 1996; Palincsar, 1998). Across the TBD literature there are examples of a focus on scaffolding. Short and Kaufman (1995) assert that what teachers did outside of Literature Circles mattered the most, including supporting students with low reading abilities. Echevarria and McDonough (1995) discussed the adaptations that benefit students with learning disabilities taking part in ICs. Wheelock (1999) stressed the importance of the pre-discussion notetaking and vocabulary study involved in Junior Great Books. Saunders and Goldenberg (1999) cite the writing component as a resource for students during ICs. Commeyras and colleagues (Commeyras, et al., 1992) explained how the text was adapted to support students (an example that illustrates the complexity of this work because changing the content is getting into problematic territory, as the scaffold could end up limiting the struggling group's content exposure). For this reason, this study developed an approach that incorporates support shown to be beneficial for ELLs—Functional Grammar Analysis—into TBD units.

This literature also supports this dissertation study's closer look at some of the "struggling comprehenders"<sup>9</sup> who participated in order to ask whether this subgroup of students experienced the TBDs differently. This is theoretically likely, as most models of comprehension

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<sup>9</sup> I define this subgroup in the methods in Chapter 3.

place the reader as a variable in the process due to variation in skills, attitudes, or a mosaic of background characteristics. As Raphael and colleagues (Raphael et al., 1992) point out, every empirical test of an approach is informative, but the literature also needs to examine how to extend the work to struggling learners. Goatley (1996) points out that special education students, for example, are increasingly participating in mainstream learning settings, even though much of the pedagogy has only been empirically tested with typical learners. The benefits for these students might not be what we anticipate. Waggoner, Chinn, Yi, and Anderson (1995), for example, found that Collaborative Reasoning did not make *all* of the students talk more, and some even spoke less. For this reason, this study made sure to include a range of comprehension abilities among the participants and to look more closely at the participation of students who struggle more with comprehension.

In summary, though TBDs have been shown to be beneficial for student learning, enacting a text-based discussion is not the end of the educational task. We need to examine what our goals are for the students in this setting, how they might struggle to achieve these goals, and what they need to help them. McMahon and colleagues (McMahon, et al., 1991) describe the need for students to step in, move through, and step back from the text through discussion. We need to make sure that even our most challenged students are able to experience this entire breadth of potential from discussions.

### **Comprehension Instruction and English Language Learners**

Literacy instruction for ELLs is challenging work, even for expert language teachers. Furthermore, as more and more ELLs enter United States schools, teachers who have never thought of themselves as language teachers are grappling with how to support these students

because literacy instruction includes instruction for literacy activities in the different content areas. Research offers us some guidelines, but there is still a lot we don't know. Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) note that “though there is a large reservoir of worldwide literature on second language instruction, the research base to guide teachers of ELLs in U.S. schools—which represent a particular context for second language instruction—is surprisingly small (p. 12).

This review of the literature intends to highlight what experts have identified as best practices for supporting the literacy development of ELLs, and to showcase some interventions that have been successful for supporting their text comprehension, specifically.

The development of theoretical models for ELLs' literacy in English is beyond the scope of this dissertation study, but it is important to note, before focusing in on literacy instruction for these students, that research exploring models for this process (i.e., Bialystok, 2002; Jiménez, García, & Pearson, 1996; Proctor, August, Carlo, & Snow, 2006; Proctor, August, Carlo, & Snow, 2010; Proctor, Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005) are still informing research and instructional design. Bialystok (2002), in a review of research attempting to articulate what we know about the influence of bilingualism on ELL literacy acquisition, summarizes this point well:

“Bilingualism clearly affects children's development of literacy, but its effect is neither simple nor unitary” (p. 159). This is a helpful backdrop for any review of ELL literacy instruction.

### **Background on ELLs and literacy instruction**

Despite their higher risk for reading difficulties (Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden, 2013), the research on literacy and English language learners is rife with words like “dearth,” “lacking,” and “scant” used to describe the empirical data on actual instruction. The executive summary of August and Shanahan's 2006 report to the National Literacy Panel states:

Becoming literate in a second language depends on the quality of teaching, which is a function of the content coverage, intensity or thoroughness of instruction, methods used

to support the special language needs of second-language learners and to build on their strengths, how well learning is monitored, and teacher preparation. There is enough research to see that instruction matters, but the specifics about the “quality of teaching” – content, instruction, and supports – have not been explored in very conclusive ways yet. (p. 3)

Furthermore, ELL education is the topic of theoretical and political debates that seem to precede and possibly upstage the focus on actual instruction. The combination of research gaps and the politics surrounding ELLs can lead to confusion for teachers: “Some educators are not well-informed about the state of current knowledge about educating ELLs. They may assume that determining effective practices is a matter of picking a philosophy, choosing among competing theories, or perhaps simply guessing” (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 11).

Still, some broad conclusions to guide instructional design have been articulated, and it is important that the right information be disseminated. Coleman and Goldenberg (2009, 2010a-c) created a series of articles to facilitate that dissemination, noting:

Undoubtedly this is a confusing, difficult, and ideologically charged area. But current and ongoing research is suggesting some answers that go beyond philosophy, theory, and guessing. Educators must know about this research and its implications for what they should do in their classrooms. At the same time, they also must know about areas where research does not yet provide clear answers and where educators must make informed “best guesses” until a firmer basis exists to guide practice and policy. (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 12)

**Current guidelines for literacy instruction.** Recent guidelines for the literacy instruction of ELLs are broadly encapsulated by Goldenberg’s handbook chapter (2010) that lists three principles about literacy education for ELLs that are supported by the current research:

- Teaching students to read in the first language promotes higher levels of reading in English.
- What we know about good reading instruction for English speakers generally holds true for ELLs learning to read English – to a point.
- When instructed in English, ELLs require additional instructional supports, primarily due to their limited English proficiency. (p. 691)

With respect to the first point, the research has been very consistent, despite the heated debates about bilingual education and policies that have passed in California and Arizona banning bilingual education. Goldenberg (2010) highlights the fact that “The finding that primary language instruction confers benefits for both L1 [first language] and L2 [second language] reading achievement might in fact be one of the strongest in the entire field of educational research” (p. 691). He points out, however, that research has shown only moderate effect sizes and that the mechanism behind this phenomenon is unclear.<sup>10</sup> Many questions still exist around the topic, such as whether bilingual education is more beneficial for some students than others, whether it is more beneficial in certain settings/contexts, whether it should have an L1 or L2 emphasis, what the teacher’s level of L1 expertise needs to be, and how long students should be in bilingual education settings.

With respect to the second point, the research shows that ELLs benefit from the explicit teaching of specific components of literacy highlighted in the National Reading Panel report (NICHD, 2000). This idea was noted in the findings of the National Literacy Panel (August & Shanahan, 2006), with the acknowledgement that the findings were similar for ELLs, but not as strong as they were for native speakers. Goldenberg (2010) urges us to design ELL literacy instruction in the context of what we know about good reading instruction in general, mainly because—due to policy, personnel issues, multi-language settings, and parental choice—instruction in the primary language is not feasible for most ELLs in the United States. He cautions, though, that “The research on instructing ELLs in English is not as solid as the research showing benefits of primary language reading instruction” (p. 694).

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<sup>10</sup> As noted earlier in this section, many researchers are exploring models for such mechanisms (see Bialystok, 2002).

With respect to the third bullet, Goldenberg (2010) emphasizes that even though “good reading instruction” seems to benefit ELLs, additional instructional supports are still necessary for them to achieve. August and Shanahan (2006) stress this same idea in their NLP report when they conclude:

Instruction that provides substantial coverage in the key components of reading—identified by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension—has clear benefits for language-minority students... *Enhanced* teaching of the key components of English literacy provides a clear advantage to English-language learners. (p. 3, italics added)

Goldenberg (2010) itemizes such instructional supports and enhanced teaching as additional clarifications and explanations, preview-review approaches in which content is presented in different languages to clarify understandings, the explicit pointing out of L1 and L2 similarities and differences, and teaching strategies in L1 for application in L2.

**Teachers of ELLs as teachers of language.** Researchers on ELL instruction have recognized the importance of helping teachers across subject areas to consider their instruction in terms of how it supports ELL engagement with the texts and talk of the classrooms. Some, in fact, have emphasized the role of the teacher, more than specific instruction, in addressing the additional needs of ELLs. Yoon (2007) conducted case studies of four ESL students in two different middle school language arts classrooms and used field notes and interviews with the teachers and students to juxtapose the kind of culturally relevant teaching that can facilitate active or passive learning in ELL students in content area classrooms. In this way, we are reminded that the content and lesson details are not the only factors at play in instruction. Yoon underscores that “although the two teachers shared the same lesson plans, the classroom dynamics were entirely different” (p. 216). This study shows how choices a teacher makes

instructionally and interpersonally affect learning outcomes for ELLs. Similarly, Short and Echevarria (2005) note variation in teaching as an influence on ELL achievement:

Some fortunate English language learners have content-area teachers who understand their linguistic needs and provide rich, meaningful lessons that support their language growth. These teachers encourage ELLs to interact with their peers and discuss ideas and work on projects that help them understand the content covered in class. Other less fortunate ELLs have teachers who fail to differentiate for diverse ability levels or to make adaptations in response to students' limited English proficiency. These teachers may expect ELLs to complete paper-and-pencil tasks independently, to read textbooks without such supports as anticipation guides and pretaught vocabulary, and to listen to lectures without visual aids. In such classrooms, ELLs are often unsure of the tasks they are expected to perform, resulting in incomplete work and gaps in their learning. (p. 9)

Teaching the material, clearly, varies across teachers. This is an interesting and lively area of research on ELL instruction, and not one to be dismissed. Yoon even asserts that “the implication of this study is that reading teachers need to be aware that they, not methods, are the most important factors in promoting ELLs’ participation” (p. 225). This claim is not proven in this study, as offering different instructional curricula and materials to the teacher who failed to engage his ELL students might have made a difference; nonetheless, the point that teachers (in all of their complexity) act as a conduit for instruction should be noted early in this dissertation, even if a study of planning and enactment across different teachers is outside of the scope.

Considerations of individual teachers and instructional methods come together in the idea of “sheltered instruction” as a means of addressing the needs of an array of teachers who must meet the needs of an array of students. Sheltered instruction, as defined by Short and Echevarria (2005) is “teach[ing] content to English learners in strategic ways that make the concepts comprehensible while promoting the students’ academic English language development” (p. 9). Sheltered instruction techniques include practices like “slower speech, clear enunciation, use of visuals and demonstrations, targeted vocabulary development, connections to student experiences, and use of supplementary materials” (Genesee, 1999 as cited in Short & Echevarria,

2005), and Goldenberg (2010) adds techniques such as the use of graphic organizers, the identification and clarification of challenging words and passages, the use of summarizing and paraphrasing, extra practice of familiar material for fluency and automaticity, and the use of predictable routines and management to that list. However, Goldenberg (2010) and Short and Echevarria (2005) both note that teachers of ELLs need to go beyond such techniques and emphasize language learning goals for students to truly offer sheltered instruction. It is from that perspective that researchers developed the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP; Echevarria & Short, 2000) model. The protocol—intended for use in teacher training and professional development, as a lesson planning tool, and for observations and evaluation purposes—has 30 items grouped into eight areas of instruction (Short, Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, 2011). The protocol uses a 0-4 Likert scale to score items, but it also has space for qualitative data collection. The researchers recognize that there is still subjectivity to the tool, as different users might make different evaluations of nuances of planning and instruction, but they see the protocol as a useful tool for guiding ELL instruction, nevertheless; it can be used to frame conversations between colleagues, between teacher candidates and teacher educators, and between teachers and their supervisors. The protocol is also structured to document growth in skills for providing sheltered instruction across the curriculum, and it has been established as valid and reliable (Short, et al., 2011). Although the researchers state that it “is not a revolutionary approach to teaching language and content to ELLs” (Short & Echevarria, 2005), they stress the effectiveness of the framework for guiding teachers to consider the many ways of meeting ELL needs during their planning and instruction, which is a means of addressing both methods and teachers perspectives on the issue. Although SIOP is not focused exclusively on



reading instruction, it is a widely-recognized influence on ELL instruction, and some of its co-curricular focus is on supporting students to comprehend text.

Another caution, however, is that these suggestions for high-quality sheltered instruction are helpful only if the teachers view themselves as ELL instructors (Yoon, 2007) and only in tandem with teacher knowledge about L2 development; Harper and de Jong (2004) caution that in efforts to quell anxiety about teaching ELLs, teachers and professional developers, together, can reduce the complexity of L2 learning to simple lists of bullet points that foster misconceptions. They link several misconceptions back to two problematic assumptions about ELL instruction: the needs for ELLs are the same as those of other diverse learners, and ESL instruction is simply a menu of options appropriate for a variety of diverse learners. If teachers carry these beliefs, their enactment of practice, such as that described in SIOP, will be misguided by these assumptions. Thus, we see a dilemma for Coleman and Goldenberg's (2009) call for dissemination: we need the guidance to be both appropriately complex and practically accessible.

**Considering ELLs in specific research-based practices.** Perhaps one way of guiding teachers of ELLs is to focus on specific participation structures and practices, so that teachers new to this work don't have to make decisions about applying somewhat-abstract guidelines to concrete classroom work on their own. For example, Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez and Rascon (2007) describe how Guided Reading (GR, Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001) can be enhanced to better support ELLs. Beyond the benefits of GR for all students, this instructional venue can offer ELLs opportunities for detailed vocabulary instruction, targeted content-area language instruction, exploration of L2 text structure, culturally-relevant material, and opportunities for experience in all modes of language-use. To correspondingly modify existing GR routines, they encourage longer, more frequent GR sessions; culturally-relevant text choices; teacher reading to

model fluency and generate discussions about ideas and vocabulary; more morphological and phonemic awareness activities during word work; and use of vocabulary journals and writing response activities. In this article they offer graphics and tables that efficiently illustrate the differences between traditional GR and GR enhanced for ELLs.

Purdy (2008) similarly touted the potential of GR for helping ELLs' language and literacy development, focusing on the opportunities for discussion of the text. She uses transcript excerpts from her case study in a third-grade Canadian classroom to illustrate how discussions of the text facilitated the co-construction of meaning in these small groups. She offers four suggestions for teachers to make these conversations meaningful for students. First, she emphasizes the importance of teacher questions—"The questions the teacher asks during guided reading shape the pattern of interaction" (p. 46)—but she points out that the single-answer fact-checking questions often criticized for reading instruction serve purposes when working with ELLs, namely offering teachers a window into student understanding and providing a clarification context. That said, she acknowledges their limits and stresses the use of open-ended questions as well to offer teachers a way to assess student understanding and provide ELLs with opportunities for higher-order thinking and oral language practice. She suggests moving from the simple questions to the more complex ones, to help students warm up, to uncover basic misunderstandings that could interfere with higher-order thinking, and to help students move from typical classroom interaction to more intimate conversational interactions. Second, Purdy stresses the huge gaps in vocabulary knowledge between ELLs and native speakers, but cautions that teachers shouldn't avoid texts with rich vocabulary. Instead, the instruction around vocabulary needs to be richer than the cursory definitions offered in typical contexts. She also warns teachers to anticipate small words that serve ambiguous grammatical purposes and idioms

that students might interpret literally; often ELLs are not aware that they have misunderstood these words. Third, she emphasizes leaving space for collaborative talk, in which the students guide the discussion as they work with each other to construct meaning. In this context, the teacher steps back or takes on more of a participant role, and students speak freely about their thoughts and questions concerning the text. Even if no conclusions are drawn by the group as a whole, exploring the text through language is beneficial for text comprehension and language development. Fourth, Purdy recommends developing a culturally-sensitive point of view about participation. She cautions that ELLs can be reticent to chime in with their own experiences, and encourages teachers to be aware of places where they might contribute, and prompt such connections while remaining respectful of their comfort levels. These guidelines offer additional examples—illustrated with rich classroom talk—of modifying established good instruction for ELLs.

**Gaps in the literature.** Despite these guiding principles and illustrative examples, however, gaps in the research remind us that sets of recommendations—however well-organized—do not substitute for theoretical or empirical findings. For example, many ELL supports are not necessarily ELL-specific in that they would also benefit any students struggling with literacy achievement or content area learning. Some recent studies have found statistically-significant evidence of benefits for ELLs working within SIOP models of instruction (see McIntyre, Klye, Chen, Munoz, & Beldon, 2010; Short, Echevarria, & Richards-Tutor, 2011; Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012), but the effects in these studies are both weak and complex, warranting further study. Thus, we still have questions about the efficacy and relative importance of the pedagogical supports that have been offered for ELLs, particularly with

respect to the different types of learners that come to school with a variety of background characteristics.

Thus, we are working with a body of research that assures us that both bilingual education and “good reading instruction” benefit ELLs, but still leaves much to be explored about how to most efficiently and effectively address the achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers. The NLP report’s (August & Shanahan, 2006) executive summary qualifies its findings: “A final important point—and, perhaps, a key finding in its own right—is that the research on acquiring literacy in a second language remains limited. While the key findings summarized herein are supported by research evidence, the research on some topics is scant” (p. 3). Goldenberg (2010) stresses the fact that “At the moment we have a number of worthwhile and potentially productive ideas, but relatively little research to support explicit guidance... We must also turn our attention to what the regular classroom teacher can do to promote higher levels of literacy attainment among these children throughout the developmental span” (p. 704). Testing the efficacy of these practices on different aspects of ELLs’ literacy achievement, while keeping an eye on the ecological validity for the classroom, is an important next step in the work.

**ELLs and comprehension instruction.** Thus far, this discussion has been about literacy instruction and support for ELLs, but this dissertation study is focused on comprehension instruction specifically, which faces even greater research gaps. Despite research findings about the parallels between literacy education for native speakers and for ELLs, one component recommended for instruction in the NRP report—comprehension—was not shown to support ELLs, which Goldenberg (2010) hypothesizes might have to do with ELLs’ background knowledge on the text topics and/or the language of their comprehension strategy instruction.

Other scholars hypothesize that ELLs struggle with comprehension because of the linguistic demands of academic text (Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004; Spycher, 2009). Whatever the reasons, there is a gap between the comprehension skills of ELLs and native English speakers that is not addressed simply through good literacy instruction. August and Shanahan (2006) state:

An important finding that emerges from the research is that word-level skills in literacy—such as decoding, word recognition and spelling—are often taught well enough to allow language-minority students to attain levels of performance equal to those of native English speakers. However, this is not the case for text-level skills—reading comprehension and writing. Language-minority students rarely approach the same levels of proficiency in text-level skills achieved by native English speakers. (p. 4)

Despite questions about how to close this gap, one thing is clear: every study that looks at oral language proficiency and literacy outcomes (e.g. Fung, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2003; Lovett, et al., 2008 finds strong correlations between the two measures, so the connection between these skills is indisputable. What that means for instruction is less clear, but an awareness of oral language proficiency is important in any intervention study:

[W]ell-developed oral proficiency in English *is* associated with English reading comprehension and writing skills for [language-minority students]. Specifically, English vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, syntactic skills, and the ability to handle metalinguistic aspects of language, such as providing definitions of words, are linked to English reading and writing proficiency. It is important to explore ways to support ELLs in their comprehension of text, especially in ways that capitalize on and enhance their oral language skills. (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 4)

Peer-reviewed studies published since the NLP report (August & Shanahan, 2006) are either programmatic and seek to improve literacy outcomes broadly for ELLs, or target particular literacy skills. August and Shanahan did not add anything substantial regarding comprehension in their update on the original report's findings (August & Shanahan, 2010), nor since. With respect to comprehension outcomes it is clear more research is needed because of the many variables involved. The types of texts; the ages, first languages, and literacy skills of the students; the purposes for reading; and the particular comprehension skills all influence whether

instruction will be successful, but there are not enough studies to address any combination of these factors in clear, research-based ways. Nevertheless, a look at research being done to support ELLs' text comprehension is useful for orienting the reader to the work in this dissertation.

### **Empirical Studies on Supporting ELL Text Comprehension**

Not surprisingly, the empirical work on comprehension instruction with ELLs falls into the same categories as comprehension instruction with native English speakers. There is work that focuses on strategy instruction, and work that involves ELLs in different TBDs. However, some work on vocabulary instruction for ELLs also exists, as vocabulary limitations hinder comprehension. I will present research in these three areas, saving TBD work for last given that it is the focus of this study. A look at these examples will illustrate what has been successful and in what ways, as well as some challenges we face in implementing promising instruction.

**Strategy instruction.** A prominent approach proven successful for supporting ELLs' text comprehension with content-area text is Collaborative Strategic Reasoning (CSR; Klingner & Vaughn, 1999; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000; Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998). This approach combines strategy instruction with cooperative learning. The routines and participation structures in this approach draw from Palincsar and Brown's (1984) work on reciprocal teaching (RT). The work is done in small groups with routines for before, during, and after reading, and students take on different roles during these routines. Students employ four comprehension strategies in these routines: preview the text, to activate prior knowledge and make predictions; click and clunk, in which students identify problematic vocabulary or ideas and make use of fix-up strategies that are articulated by the approach; get the gist, in which students articulate the principal idea of the text passage; and wrap-up, in which students summarize the text and

generate and answer questions that could be asked about the ideas in the text on a test (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000; Klingner, et al., 1998). The approach is rooted in theories of cooperative learning that support peer-to-peer learning and the benefits it bestows on both the learner and “teacher” (e.g., Cazden, 1988; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Additionally, it allows ELL students to make use of the language skills of other students, particularly more proficient bi/multi-lingual students who share their language background and can assist in their native language. This approach is designed “to promote content learning, language acquisition, and reading comprehension in diverse classrooms” (Klingner & Vaughn, 2000).

One study (Klingner, et al., 1998) used CSR in five fourth-grade classrooms. The school’s demographics were diverse, but predominantly Hispanic. Three classes (N = 85) were assigned to the intervention condition, and the other two classes (N = 56) were in control conditions.<sup>11</sup> The researchers provided all of the CSR instruction and were present in the classes to collect data, maintain fidelity, and to monitor procedures to attest to comparable conditions across classes. In the intervention condition, the researcher taught students about the procedures and roles over three days, with students modeling as they grew more proficient. On the fourth day, students began applying the approach in five- or six-person groups. In the control condition, the researcher covered the same material with students following the suggested lessons in the teacher manual. The data came from pre-post results on a standardized reading test and a post-intervention social studies unit test, as well as the audiotaped small group discussions.

The findings show students in the treatment group made significantly greater comprehension gains, and equal gains in content. The comprehension gains, however, were not

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<sup>11</sup> The Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement — Revised word identification subtest was used to randomly assign classes and make groups as comparable as possible.

statistically significant when only students with limited-English proficiency (LEP) were examined; the researchers suggest it might require more time and/or a larger sample to show significant results in this area. Discourse analysis of the small group transcripts showed that 65% of the discourse was academic, 25% was procedural, 8% was feedback, and 2% was off-task. The students spent the most strategic talk on the click and clunk strategy and the get the gist strategy.

Another study (Klingner & Vaughn, 2000) used CSR to structure the work of 37 fifth-graders reading two chapters of a science text over eight 30- to 40-minute sessions. All but two of the students spoke Spanish as their first language, or came from bilingual homes that spoke Spanish and English. The student groups were heterogeneous in academic ability levels, and the researchers used two language proficiency measures to ensure the small groups contained at least two high-achieving or average-achieving bilingual students and two students with limited English proficiency. The study had two phases, the first of which involved the teacher spending two months training the class in the CSR process. This involved explicit instruction in the roles and routines, and application in demonstration lessons. (This followed an all-day researcher-led training on CSR for the teacher.) The second phase involved engaging students in the CSR approach with science texts focused on systems of the human body. The data came from the transcribed small group work; a vocabulary measure on which students provided definitions for content-area words covered in the text and other words in the text on which researchers anticipated struggle; and the first author's written records from classroom observations, conversations, and reflections.

The findings show that about 20% of utterances were reading from the text, approximately half of the utterances in every group were devoted to identifying and clarifying



clunks, and a 15-34% across-group range of utterances focused on the get-the-gist step of the process. Although little time was spent on the wrap-up step (likely because many students did not finish all of the assigned text in a session), little time was also spent on procedural negotiation of the tasks. Importantly, “coding from the transcripts revealed that the groups spent virtually all of their time engaged in academic-related, strategic instruction” (Klingner & Vaughn, 2000, p. 83). Results also showed that vocabulary words were a chronic source of clunks. Students offered each other different responses for these clunks (ranging from quick translations to elaborate clarification), and how these responses were proportioned varied across groups. Nevertheless, even in groups with a high percentage of quick translations, students’ clunks were addressed and the researchers concluded that “students appeared to take seriously their responsibilities of learning the content and helping others do so as well” (p.85). With respect to helping behaviors more generally, the study found that some students were more proficient than others at helping their classmates with the work, but there was evidence of a number of helping techniques, including checking for comprehension, elaborating, providing positive or corrective feedback, and providing explicit conceptual instruction.

This study was encouraging to the researchers because in previous work they had been concerned with the amount of time students spent discussing procedures. Modifications they had made in training students for the CSR work appeared to have been successful; there was very little procedural discourse and there were no examples of off-task talk in the transcripts, which is remarkable. Highlighting the differences in the CSR training between these studies—the teacher trained the students instead of a researcher, and over a longer course of time—they note that these discourse changes point to the importance of teacher guidance in helping instructional approaches to be effective. In other notably effective approaches, such as reciprocal teaching

(Palincsar & Brown, 1984), the teacher is initially present with the small groups to help maintain focus and guide the roles and routines. Because CSR is done in cooperative learning groups, front-loading this guidance is important. However, Klingner and Vaughn (2000) also note the excellent teaching skills of the veteran teacher in this study, and caution that the generalizability of these results might be tempered depending on teacher experience and skill.

Sáenz, Fuchs, and Fuchs (2005) also explored cooperative learning approaches. They examined an intervention called PALS (Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies) with native Spanish speakers with learning disabilities. The purpose of the peer-tutoring program was to increase fluency, comprehension, and strategy use. Pedagogically, the active engagement and increased chances for feedback and monitoring make PALS suitable for students with learning disabilities. There are also pedagogical rationales for ELLs, mainly concerning increased opportunity for oral language use, feedback, differentiation, and motivation.

PALS uses three main activities: partner reading with retell, paragraph shrinking, and prediction relay. It has been proven effective on comprehension and oral language measures for fluent English-speakers with learning disabilities, and appears to benefit middle-achievers as well. During the different stages, students alternate tutor/tutee roles for coaching the decoding and retelling. How they are trained to do this is not specified, but training in this study occurred during sessions separate from the experiment's data-collection sessions. Additionally, students can earn points and are on teams to provide a motivational and management aspect to the program.

The researchers worked with 132 students in grades three to six and twelve randomly assigned teachers. Teachers taught two reading classes at each school, one with PALS and one with typical instruction. The intervention was used in thirty-five minute sessions three times per

week over fifteen weeks. Students from the top halves and bottom halves of the classes were paired and rotated every three to four weeks. The study collected outcome data for eleven students in each class: two students with learning disabilities, three low-achieving students, three average-achieving students, and three high-achieving students. The measures were researcher-designed cloze tasks and comprehension questions focused on the folktales under study. They also collected student and teacher questionnaires.

PALS students outgrew the comparison group on comprehension measures, regardless of student “type” (based on achievement level and language status). There was a strong effect size for all students with growth of over one standard deviation for ELLs with learning disabilities. The researchers concluded that “PALS improves the reading comprehension of ELLs with and without learning disabilities in transitional bilingual education settings” (Saéñz, et al., 2005, p. 243). Additionally, questionnaires showed that teachers and students both enjoyed the intervention condition. The measures of fluency showed no significant effects, leaving fluency as an instructional challenge.

Taboada, Bianco, and Bowerman (2012) explored a specific strategy—questioning—as a mean of enhancing the comprehension of ELLs with science texts. Questioning helps students integrate knowledge with new information, and offers insight into the process others are in with respect to meaning-making. It also demonstrates levels of understanding of the text. Reviews of questioning studies show that frames used for different types of questions are useful for enhancing comprehension of expository texts. Studies have also shown that student questioning can be motivating. However, there have not been many studies of questioning with ELLs.

This research consisted of two complementary studies. The first was a descriptive study concerned with the relationship between questioning skills and vocabulary knowledge. It

focused on two fifth-grade classrooms consisting of 35 native English speakers and 25 ELLs, mostly of Asian descent. The researchers tested students on general vocabulary, text-based questioning, and comprehension measures. They then presented a brief unit on “Earth and Space Systems.” Students browsed a text for seven to eight minutes, then had twenty minutes to write down any questions they had. They then read the text and answered comprehension questions about it. The researchers coded the questions at four levels: factual, key concepts, key concepts *and* prior knowledge, or relationship oriented.

The results show that, for native speakers, general vocabulary accounted for a significant amount of variance in comprehension, as expected, but when questioning was entered into the equation it accounted for variance even when controlling for vocabulary knowledge. The reverse was true for ELLs. The researchers concluded that vocabulary usurps questioning as a predictor of comprehension success.

Nonetheless, study two examined a questioning intervention. Ten fourth grade ELLs received daily instruction for thirty minutes over six weeks. The instruction followed a gradual release of responsibility model. Students were asked to write as many questions as they could about a text. They did this once before the intervention, twice during, and once after. The analysis leveled the questions for each student and divided this by the total number of questions to get an average for each level. The researchers also assessed the students for decoding ability, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension skills at the end of the instruction.

The results showed that high-level questioners displayed better decoding and comprehension skills, and average-level questioners were also better at decoding and comprehension than low-level questioners, showing an association between questioning and comprehension. Instruction, however, benefitted all questioners, regardless of language status.

The two studies together led the researchers to conclude that instruction in questioning may be beneficial to students struggling with comprehension, but that vocabulary knowledge is a threshold for the benefit of questioning. Thus, vocabulary instruction is also important for comprehension success, which leads to the next category of empirical work on supporting ELL text comprehension.

**Vocabulary instruction.** Vocabulary instruction is another potential means of supporting comprehension for ELLs, considering that dramatic differences in vocabulary knowledge exist between ELLs and their English-only (EO) peers. In fact, in a review of research on vocabulary instruction for ELLs, August, Carlo, Dressler, and Snow (2005) explain the relationship between vocabulary and comprehension, and note the risk this relationship poses for ELLs:

ELLs who experience slow vocabulary development are less able to comprehend text at grade level than their EO peers, and they may be at risk of being diagnosed as learning disabled, when in fact their limitation is due to limited English vocabulary and poor comprehension that results in part from this limitation. (p. 50)

These researchers gathered the extant research, noting that “it is astounding that in the past 25 years there have been very few quasiexperimental or experimental studies focused on English vocabulary learning among elementary-school language-minority children” (p. 52) and contrasting this lack of research with a wealth of research on vocabulary instruction with monolingual students.

To frame the consideration of ELL vocabulary knowledge, August and colleagues (August, et al., 2005) describe dimensions of breadth and depth, explaining that not only do ELLs know fewer words, they know words less well:

Knowing a word implies knowing many things about the word—its literal meaning, its various connotations, the sorts of syntactic constructions into which it enters, the morphological options it offers and a rich array of semantic associates such as synonyms

and antonyms (see Nagy & Scott, 2000 for a review). These various aspects are related to the depth of word knowledge, which is as important as learning many words (breadth of word knowledge). Second-language learners have been shown to be impaired in depth of word knowledge, even for frequently occurring words (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993). (p. 51)

From the theoretical and empirical research base, they make three recommendations for developing methods to build vocabulary knowledge in ELLs. First, it is helpful to capitalize on cognate knowledge, which goes beyond word-level similarities to suffix analogs across languages. Second, it is important to broaden the consideration of which words to teach, because many words that are commonplace for native speakers require explicit instruction for ELLs. They suggest a framework for designing instruction in “basic” words that considers dimensions of concreteness (how easily the word be shown or acted out), cognate status, depth of word meaning (how many different meanings exist for the word), and utility (how frequently the word is encountered). Third, they emphasize the need for review and reinforcement, particularly through read-alouds and post-read-aloud activities that make use of the focal vocabulary. The researchers also note some of the major challenges for vocabulary instruction for ELLs, namely the challenge in selecting which words to teach in conjunction with limited time; although academic vocabulary is important, it is also important to teach words that won’t be taught anywhere else.

Carlo and colleagues (Carlo, et al., 2004) conducted one of the studies informing this review. Acknowledging “the difficulty of generating a large instructional impact on vocabulary knowledge” (p. 191), these researchers wanted to test the impact of a vocabulary intervention for ELLs that combined direct word instruction and word-learning strategy instruction. They conducted a 15-week intervention in which teachers in three states (California, Virginia, and Massachusetts) worked with fifth-grade students on a researcher-designed vocabulary

curriculum. In the final data set, 94 students were ELLs and 75 were EOs. The work involved 30- to 45-minute sessions four days per week. Every fifth week was a review of words from previous sessions. Following recommendations in the literature, they contextualized the vocabulary work with focal texts, all of which focused on the theme of immigration. They measured the impact through tests of word knowledge—including the standardized Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised (PPVT-R) and researcher-designed tests of polysemy production, word mastery, word association tasks, morphology, and text-specific reading comprehension.

The results showed no gains by treatment on the PPVT-R, but there was gain by treatment on all the other measures, including text-specific reading comprehension. Most importantly for this intervention that included strategy instruction for vocabulary learning, “the children in the intervention classrooms gained knowledge of the words that were explicitly taught as well as knowledge that should support the efficiency of their incidental learning of novel words” (p. 203). The gains by treatment on the comprehension measure were less dramatic, but still evident even in such a short intervention that was not focused directly on comprehension instruction.

Three studies that occurred after August and colleagues’ review (August, et al., 2005) also show the impact of vocabulary instruction on comprehension outcomes. Taboada and Rutherford (2011) were interested in different approaches to ELL vocabulary instruction and their effects on comprehension outcome measures. Their study explored contextualized vocabulary instruction (CVI) and intensified vocabulary instruction (IVI) in a fourth grade science classroom. CVI focuses on strategies for finding the meanings of unknown words in text through multiple and varied text experiences that teach vocabulary incidentally. IVI focuses on a

plethora of specific vocabulary words. It is explicit, involves words from different tiers,<sup>12</sup> and is planned. It takes place in language rich environments, focuses on generativity, and involves multiple exposures. Both approaches focus on academic language, which the researchers define as “the technical, content-specific words in the domain of life science” (p. 114). Two different fourth-grade teachers implemented the different conditions. Twenty ELL students (mainly Hispanic) were selected based on language status; both conditions had an equal number of students from levels one to four on the language proficiency measure, with most being in levels three and four. The researchers collected data before, twice during, and after the study, measuring academic vocabulary, reading comprehension, and expository writing. During analysis they divided the sample into two groups based on reading ability. Additional qualitative data from classroom observations and teacher follow-up questions informed the analysis.

Students at both reading levels improved their content-specific academic vocabulary, but those receiving IVI improved more. Students receiving CVI, however, did better on measures of comprehension and expository writing. Moreover, CVI students improved on both literal and inferential comprehension questions, whereas IVI students improved only on literal questions. The researchers conclude that CVI may provide stronger conceptual understanding that could be applied to inferential items. Thus, CVI instruction appears more effective for influencing comprehension success, even if vocabulary improved more in the IVI condition. Further, the CVI condition helped the students with the lowest language proficiencies the most.

One study combined efforts to promote vocabulary growth and comprehension strategy use within the same intervention. Proctor, Dalton, and Grisham (2007) worked with 30 fourth-grade students (16 Spanish-speaking ELLs and 14 native English-speaking monolinguals) in two

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<sup>12</sup> “Tiered” refers to consideration of the frequency and specificity of different vocabulary words. Lower tiers hold common vocabulary for everyday objects, behaviors, etc. Higher tier words are more specialized. For more information on vocabulary tiers, see Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002.



classrooms over four weeks, implementing a technology-based intervention called a Universal Literacy Environment (ULE) that built in vocabulary and strategy support. Students worked with ULE three times per week for 45-minute sessions, for a total of twelve sessions. Because the teachers selected the students and knew about the focus of the study, all of the students were from the lowest quartile in comprehension performance. During the intervention, students chose to read from eight different texts over the course of the study (complementary pairs of folk tales and informational texts about an element of the folk tales). There were pre-, during-, and post-reading stages to the computer work and the texts periodically cued them with vocabulary helps, or by modeling or cueing strategy use. Two elements of the embedded scaffolding are especially interesting. First, the scaffolding was designed to use a combination of “push” and “pull” elements, as in the amount of learner control over scaffold use. Sometimes student were required to use certain scaffolds (e.g., entering three words per text into a glossary with student-written definitions) and sometimes scaffold use was optional (e.g. using the glossary’s pronunciation element). This combination was intended to acknowledge research that shows both types of technology-embedded scaffolding to be at times useful and at times problematic. Second, the teacher could adjust the level of scaffolding such that as students improved, which was evident in work they produced while working with a text, scaffolding could be gradually “faded” for subsequent work, which is in keeping with the theoretical underpinnings of scaffolding (Palincsar, 1998). The study’s measures of student outcomes were pre-post scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT) vocabulary and comprehension measures, along with the tracked usage of the different scaffolds by each student and their completed work.

The results showed no significant growth on vocabulary or comprehension measures. However, when they looked at the data on scaffold usage, they found that “ELLs accessed the

available supports, particularly the coaches and the glossary, more often than their EO counterparts (although not significantly)” (Proctor, et al., 2007, p. 85) and called this “an encouraging sign given the focus of the intervention” (Proctor, et al., 2007, p. 85). They also found that students who scored lower on the pretest measure used the scaffolding features more, and that more use of the scaffolding features was positively associated with gains on the vocabulary and comprehension measures. Although even significant correlations were weak, the researchers suggest it is still encouraging to see any of these associations with such a small sample size and they encourage further work.

Another study looked at vocabulary instruction in concert with other instruction. Calderón, et. al. (2005) designed a year-long (October through March) intervention based on the Success For All (SFA; Slavin & Madden, 2001 as cited in Calderón, et al., 2005) instructional model, enhanced with research-based vocabulary instruction. All of the 239 students in the final sample were third-grade Spanish-dominant students that were part of programs intended to transition them from Spanish to English literacy so that they could be mainstreamed the following year. The intervention instruction is described as follows:

In fast-paced, 90-minute lessons, students learned letter sounds, sound blending, sight words, vocabulary, and comprehension skills in English. Because students could already read in Spanish, the instructional pace for teaching reading in English was rapid, spending little time on skills common to Spanish and English but stopping to focus on areas in which the languages differ. A major focus was on vocabulary. (p. 122)

The study worked with eight experimental classrooms and eight controls in a matched control design. The vocabulary support was comprehensive and embedded in contexts with decodable texts and children’s literature, and included preteaching vocabulary and developing vocabulary through discourse around text, as well as oral language activities that developed and reinforced vocabulary. The selection of words and instruction was based on the framework described in the

August and colleagues' review (August, et al., 2005), which included considerations of concreteness, cognate status, depth of word meaning, and utility. In the fall and spring, the students were tested with several subtests from the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery – Revised (WLPB-R) in both Spanish and English forms.

The experimental group showed significantly greater gains on three of the four English subtests: word attack, passage comprehension, and picture vocabulary. No significant difference was detected on the letter-word identification subtest. The experimental group showed significantly greater gains on two of the four Spanish subtests: picture vocabulary and letter-word identification. No significant difference was detected on word attack or passage comprehension subtests. The researchers viewed these encouraging finding with a short intervention as “a first step in a program of research that we expect will produce an effective, replicable program to build word knowledge in English and facilitate Spanish-to-English transition following a Spanish reading program” (p. 130).

This last study looked at ways of embedding strategy instruction into different aspects of the curriculum, one example being read alouds. Read alouds involve the discussion of text, so as we consider studies in the next section, we can keep in mind that vocabulary instruction can be woven together with dialogic approaches to comprehension instruction for ELLs.

**Dialogic instruction.** Another category of research on comprehension instruction for ELLs focuses on what Wilkinson and Son (2011) call “dialogic” instruction. Although they were focused on comprehension instruction more broadly, Wilkinson and Son note that “An important finding from the body of research on text-based discussions is that discussion can benefit English Language Learners” (p. 371). Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005) report that one barrier to the use of TBDs with ELLs is that some teachers of ELLs do not feel these students are

capable of TBDs, for reasons rooted in academic performance, personal dispositions, and cultural norms. To counter that perspective, they describe the master's work of the first author in her fourth-grade classroom, using literature circles to help engage the ELLs in her class that rarely participated in any of the daily activities: "The purpose was not only to increase reading skill and comprehension but also to create a greater motivation in her students to read and participate more often in the classroom community" (p. 94). Carrison worked with five ELL students in a class of 24 fourth-graders. Two of the students spoke Spanish, two spoke Ukrainian, and one spoke Russian at home. The sample size of five students is extremely small, but this qualitative study highlights the many aspects of L2 development that were addressed through literature circle activities: literacy skills through the shared and independent reading of the text, oral language development through discussions of the text, and comprehension skills through the encouragement of personal connections. The researchers asserted that, "Undoubtedly, literature circles are a means to promote the acquisition and practice of many important skills. In particular, they provide a wide array of opportunities for second language learners to practice their English language skills" (p. 97). Although the emphasis in this article is partially on student participation, the authors echo the instinctual association educators have about participation and comprehension:

One of the most powerful facets of using literature circles is this dynamic interaction or transaction among readers in the group and between readers and the text. This practice encourages, even demands, that students become active participants first in reading their books and second in the group discussions and projects or activities that are integrated into the structure. (p. 96)

The literature circles were formed when students listed their top three preferences after the teacher gave several book talks on an array of high-quality multicultural books selected with help from the school's media specialist. This self-selection resulted in heterogeneous ability groups.

The groups met daily over three weeks and Carrison observed their work at least twice each week. Activities involved in the literature circle work included reading response journals to prepare students for group discussion, two or three extension projects that students did during the reading of the books, and a final group presentation to the class about their book that could take a variety of forms. To examine the impact of using literature circles with her students, Carrison used pre-post surveys on books the students read for pleasure to gauge motivation to read, as well as written feedback from the students about their enjoyment and struggles during the literature circle work.

The most notable change during the work was an increase in student reading levels. The two lowest readers, both ELLs, increased one grade level on comprehension assessment after completing two rounds of literature circles over two months. (The study was not designed to control for other influences on reading level, however, so these results should be interpreted with that in mind.) Moreover, the researchers highlighted that “Although all students reported enjoying participating in literature circles, the greatest successes and increased levels of enthusiasm were evident among the ELL students and the reluctant readers. They note details about the five ELL students, such as one student who participated two to three times per week in class before the literature circles and became an avid participator across the daily classroom contexts afterwards. Another ELL student who had never spoken in class became actively involved in literature circle activities; for example, she acted as the lead character in a dramatic presentation of the text. Another ELL student expressed that he spoke more in literature circles because he didn’t feel dumb anymore.

In a recent study of a dialogic approach, Zhang, Anderson, and Nguyen-Jahiel (2013) explored the use of Collaborative Reasoning (CR) discussions with ELLs. They saw the

potential of CRs for developing both oral language and academic language in these students, two areas important to scholastic success, but often neglected in the research on ELL literacy instruction. They worked with four fifth-grade classes, randomly assigning one mainstream room and one bilingual sheltered room to intervention or control conditions. Of the 90 students involved, 75 were Latino/a and were the focus of the analyses. Each of the four teachers received CR training in a day-long workshop and had a researcher present for assistance during the eight 20-minute CR lessons they conducted over four weeks. The researchers gathered pre-posttest data on English vocabulary, syntactic knowledge, and reading comprehension. They also gathered post-intervention measures of English reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and surveys of motivation, engagement, and English learning attitudes.

The results were layered and complex due to interactions between the intervention and the mainstream/bilingual classroom conditions. Overall, however, they found that:

Engaging in language-rich Collaborative Reasoning discussions accelerates fifth-grade Spanish-speaking English language learners' oral and written English, as well as their motivation, engagement in discussions, and English learning attitudes... Despite the short duration of the intervention, only eight discussions over four weeks, positive effects were obtained not only on language comprehension (listening and reading), but also on language production (speaking and writing). p. 57

This study highlights the importance of discussion in the comprehension instruction for ELLs, specifically, who need that experience in school to strengthen their language skills in tandem with their comprehension skills.

The Instructional Conversations (IC; Goldenberg, 1993; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Saunders, et al., 1997) is the TBD approach most associated with ELLs. ICs are actually just one of twelve components that researchers are exploring for supporting bilingual students in transition programs. As referenced in the previous section of this chapter, Saunders and

Goldenberg (1999) evaluated the effects of ICs and literature logs—together and independently—on the story comprehension and thematic understanding of ELL students in a transitional program. The 116 student subjects were from three fifth- and two fourth-grade classrooms with a mixture of fluent- and limited-English-proficient students (FEP and LEP, respectively), the former of which included both English only students and ELLs whose language development had classified them as fluent based on district measures. They did work with students that involved four conditions: ICs plus literature logs, ICs only, literature logs only, and control conditions. Over 10 - 15 calendar days, teachers enacted all four conditions in their classrooms to control for teacher effects, and worked closely with the researchers to maintain fidelity to the interventions. The researchers caution that the study's design doesn't completely control for time on text, as the comparison conditions involves literacy activities related to the social studies curriculum; however, the two interventions could be compared to each other in the conditions in which they were implemented alone. The measures used in this study were researcher-designed tests of factual comprehension and interpretive comprehension, and thematic essay assignments that assessed theme-explanation and theme-exemplification skills.

The results showed that students in the IC-plus-literature log condition improved almost one standard deviation higher than the control group on the factual comprehension measure. The literature log group also scored significantly higher, but the IC group did not show significant outcome differences. The interpretive comprehension measure showed similar results, with the IC-plus-literature log group and the IC-only group scoring significantly higher than the control group, but this time the literature log group showed no significant differences. Results on the thematic measures varied by language proficiency status. For thematic explanation, the FEP students scored four (the highest score possible) more often in experimental conditions, but it

was not significant; but the LEP students were significantly more likely to score fours in the IC-plus-literature log condition. Similarly, for theme exemplification, the FEP students scored a four more often in experimental conditions, but it was not significant. For LEPs, however, again the IC-plus-literature log condition showed significantly more fours than the other conditions.

These results led the researchers to three conclusions. First, the use of ICs and literature logs together can improve factual and interpretive comprehension for both FEP and LEP students. Second, the use of ICs and literature logs to promote thematic understanding depended on language status; the condition benefitted LEPs but not FEPs. Third, with respect to both factual and interpretive comprehension, the effects of ICs are somewhat stronger than those of literature logs, regardless of student language status. Saunders and Goldenberg state that these conclusions imply teachers can use ICs and literature logs together to promote comprehension, and should use ICs if time demands force them to choose between the two practices. For promoting thematic understanding, however, both practices are needed for supporting LEPs. The final implication the researchers make position the TBD as a scaffold, rather than as something requiring scaffolding: “Transition students can participate successfully in grade-appropriate language arts curriculum if they are given the kind of support provided by instructional conversations and literature logs (or, again, other approaches with demonstrable effectiveness)” (p. 296). This implication complicates the idea of scaffolding. If TBDs serve as scaffolds for ELLs’ (or other students’) text comprehension, must they be additionally scaffolded? In the case of ICs, which were designed with the needs of ELLs in mind, it appears not. In the case of other TBD approaches, there might be the need to adjust the approach to meet ELL needs.



Despite Saunders and Goldenberg's (1999) very practical implications for classrooms, there is a need to acknowledge that this is complex teaching work. Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) acknowledge the extensive professional development involved in helping teachers become skilled at ICs. Whether consideration of ELL needs is embedded in the TBD approach or the approach need to be adjusted to those needs, teachers with little TBD experience will have trouble making use of this avenue of instruction for ELLs. Matsumura, Garnier, and Spybrook (2012) considered how TBDs can be used to support ELLs, but further considered how to support teachers in doing this work. They investigated Content-Focused Coaching (CFC) as a means of enacting dialogic instruction with ELLs, specifically through the QtA approach (Beck, et al., 1996; McKeown, et al., 1993; Sandora, et al., 1999). The CFC model "seeks to effect change in student achievement by fostering learning opportunities at multiple levels: district, school, and classroom" (p. 37). Therefore, they sought to examine the effect of a CFC program on student reading achievement, with consideration of how the quality of the classroom discussions mediated that effect. The researchers worked with fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in 29 schools serving primarily ELL students and randomly assigned them such that 15 experienced the CFC intervention and 14 received no change to their usual literacy coaching norms. Forty percent of the students in the final sample were ELLs. The researchers worked with these schools for three years and teacher attrition and replacement occurred, which was considered in the analyses. The first year involved training the coaches and building relationships with the schools. Coaches were trained in the theory and practice of QtA and of Accountable Talk (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008), and then trained the teachers in their assigned school in these methods, following an apprenticeship model that involved teaching, modeling, observing, and reflecting on teacher practice over the following two years. Fidelity of implementation was

monitored through teacher surveys about different components of the apprenticeship model and the behaviors of their assigned coaches. Fidelity was lower than desired with respect to frequency (but still significantly higher than coaching at comparison schools), but the coaching activities that did occur still displayed an array of coaching behaviors across the apprenticeship model. The study used the state standardized accountability tests as the outcome measures; the test examines students' basic recall skills as well as higher-order comprehension skills.

The study used hierarchical linear modeling (Raudenbush, 1997) to examine student outcomes at the school level within each condition. This allowed them to consider the way school-assigned coaches mediated the effects of the CFC program on student outcomes. The results showed significantly more growth on the reading assessment for ELLs in the CFC-assigned schools. Additionally, modeling showed that the CFC program had a positive effect on the kinds of discussions happening in schools, relative to the discussions in rooms with teachers assigned to the comparison condition. Also, the quality of the TBD (measured by twice-yearly videotaped observations rated by trained observers) was also significantly related to student reading achievement. The researchers hypothesize that the CFC program's effect on student reading achievement was due to its positive effect on classroom discussions, and a direct effect was that "the CFC program helped close the gap in reading achievement between ELL and non-ELL students in our study" (p. 44), which is exactly the outcome the various studies in this review are trying to achieve.

In summary, the limited research on comprehension instruction for ELLs offers avenues of support, methodological approaches, and encouraging lines of inquiry. Thus far, it appears that strategy instruction, vocabulary development, and TBDs all have the potential to serve ELLs well, especially when language support is key to the design. This reinforces Goldenberg's

(2010) and August and Shanahan's (2006) conclusions that good literacy instruction for native speakers benefits ELLs as well, but that enhancement might be necessary to facilitate these benefits. This dissertation study adds to this line of inquiry by examining the affordances and challenges of Functional Grammar Analysis and its explicit examination of language to enhance the benefits ELLs can gain during TBDs.

### **Pedagogical Applications of Functional Grammar Analysis**

Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) is an area of educational research that has garnered more attention in the United States in the last decade. It has been used in different contexts, but has been of particular interest to researchers and educators focused on supporting ELLs.

#### **Background on FGA**

I explained in Chapter 1 that FGA draws from Systemic Functional Linguistics, a theory of language that differs from more traditional ideas about language use and grammar. SFL has been used extensively as an analytic tool for researchers in different disciplines. Functional Grammar is a pedagogical application of these ideas, rooted in SFL theories about language, but also articulating its own theories about how language is learned and should be taught.

**FGA's beginnings.** Functional Grammar has specific geographic and educational roots. Gebhard, Shin, and Seger (2011) explain that "SFL was first applied in education almost 30 years ago as a way of teaching academic literacies in Sydney, Australia" ( p. 798). Since then, research about Functional Grammar has been branching out. Martin (2009) summarizes:

For the past three decades teachers and functional linguists in Australia have been co-operatively engaged in action research projects designed to enhance literacy teaching and learning across all sectors of schooling... In the 1980s this research focused on writing in primary school, dealing principally with indigenous and migrant Australian students who were learning English as a second language outside the home... In the 1990s the focus of this work was extended to writing in secondary school and the workplace. (p. 10 – 11)

In subsequent decades, educational research using Functional Grammar to support ELL literacy achievement has reached schools in the United States, and has begun to focus on reading text as well as writing. Several studies have helped to refine the pedagogy and establish an empirical foundation for further inquiry, but there is still a vast frontier to explore.

**Metalinguage and a sample of FGA terminology.** I explained SFL theory in very broad strokes in the theoretical framework for this study. Halliday proposes two ideas that are important to keep in mind when exploring FGA. First, language is genre-based, meaning that the specificities of the context regulate our written and spoken discourse (Martin & Rose, 2008). We are often unaware of the language expectations we carry into a context until something irregular occurs. Second, language is made up of a series of choices we make at the word, clause, and text levels (constrained somewhat by the “genre” of the situated discourse), and these choices realize three different types of meaning that concern the field of the discourse (what we are talking about), the mode of the discourse (whether it is written or spoken, emailed or published, in person or over the phone, etc.) and the tenor of the discourse (how it evokes the relationship between the participants) (Eggins, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2008, 2007). Although each of these different meanings are worthy of their own extensive study, they also serve as the foundation for much finer-grained work with FGA.

Field, tenor, and mode are examples of FGA terminology that is often referred to as its “metalinguage.” However, metalinguage also refers to talk about language, and in this sense, the FGA terminology is only one aspect of a larger metalinguage that it facilitates. Moore and Schleppegrell (in press) define metalinguage as “language for referring to the choices authors have made in writing those texts” (p. 2) that students are discussing and distinguish the FG metalinguage from literary or traditional grammar metalinguage in that it “connects language

forms to meanings in contexts of use” (p. 2). Schleppegrell (2013) cites Berry’s (2010) conception of metalanguage as both terminology and process. For purposes of clarity in this study, I will refer to FGA’s specialized vocabulary for identifying certain linguistic features as “FGA terminology” and I will refer to talk about language as “metalanguage.”

To both illustrate some examples of FGA terminology and to prepare the reader for the specifics of the units in this study, I will describe the FGA terminology I made use of in this study. Some of these terms come right out of SFL theory, but others have been adapted by researchers working with FGA in attempts to make them more accessible for students and teachers. Work on naming, defining, and describing the terminology in accessible ways is ongoing in this field of research, and is a focus of Chapter 6 in this dissertation.

I worked with FGA terminology that names the basic elements of a clause. In traditional grammar we talk about a clause having a subject and predicate; FGA theory deems those labels unhelpful for connecting language and meaning. Underlining the predicate in a sentence, for example, does little for engaging the reader with the meaning of the underlined language. Instead, FGA uses the terms *participant*, *process*, and *circumstance* to name the elements of a clause. The *participants* in clauses are analogous to traditional nouns, in that they are subjects or objects of actions or states of being. A participant can be a person, animal, thing, or idea, like a noun. Naming it as a participant, however, implies a connection to the rest of the clause, namely the *process*. The process is what is happening in the clause, which includes any obvious actions that are external to the participant, but also internal feelings and states of being or having. *Circumstances* (which I do not work with in this study) modify the participant or process to describe, how, when, or where the clause occurred.

*Participants* exist in every clause, but might be incidental. For example, in the sentence “I shut the door,” the door is a *participant* in the sentence<sup>13</sup> receiving the action of someone shutting it. *Participants* encompass the entire phrase that refers to them. For example, the door might be “the heavy metal door.” Paying attention to *participants* can help readers identify who/what is the actor or receiver of action, examine the relationship between two *participants*, and track important *participants* in a narrative. It can also help them view things as important *participants* in a narrative that aren’t people or animals.

Further nested in the terminology are *process types*. FGA has modified Halliday’s more extensive menu of *process types* to talk about four: *doing*, *saying*, *sensing*, and *being*. The *Language & Meaning* work led to a division of these four types into two categories of external and internal or, in literary terms, of showing and telling *processes*. *Doing* and *saying processes* are physical and verbal actions we can visualize; and the *process* encompasses the entire phrase that expresses these actions. Therefore, a *doing process* could be **ran, runs, is running, is running fast, or is running like the wind**. A *saying process* could be **shouted, shouts, is shouting, had shouted, or shouted at the top of her lungs**.<sup>14</sup> These *processes* show us things about a participant with the help of inference. On the other hand, *sensing* and *being processes* are feelings, sensations, perceptions, or states of being that we cannot visualize; and the *process* encompasses the entire phrase that expresses these feelings, sensations, perceptions, or states of being. Therefore, a *sensing process* could be **heard, sees, is feeling, or will like**. A *being process* often involves forms of the “to be” verb such as **is, were, or will be**, but can also include **became, seems, and might appear**. Forms of the “to have” verb are also considered *being*

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<sup>13</sup> “I” is another participant in the sentence.

<sup>14</sup> I noted with students that a *process* need not be so dramatic to be visualized. Other *doing processes* include **read, is sitting, or slept like a log**. Other *saying processes* include **said, tells, is explaining, or spoke**.

*processes* such as **had**, **have**, and **has**. These *processes* tell us things about a *participant* we might not otherwise know. These classifications of *processes* are helpful for readers to identify how the author is developing characters and what we are inferring as we read narratives.

Another FGA term we worked with in this study was *connector*, which is a word that connects two clauses. (This is a wonderful example of the FGA terminology linking intimately to meaning; the analog in traditional grammar would be “conjunction,” which isn’t as helpful for conveying the meaningful role of the language.) I introduced students to two common *connectors*: “and” and “but.” I explained that “and” served to connect ideas that were alike, whereas “but” served to connect ideas that were different. We explored how “and” was used when listing a series of items (things one could buy at the store, friends coming to the party, etc.) or ideas that went together (studying hard and acing the test). We explored how “but” was used to signal a change (**We were enjoying the picnic, but then it rained.**), a juxtaposition (**My head was warm, but my hands were cold.**), or something unexpected (**I got a lot of work done, but then my computer crashed.**) These *connectors* can signal to a reader whether ideas go together or are being juxtaposed, which is helpful for tracking actions, character traits, feelings, and many other dynamic ideas in narratives.

Another set of terms developed in the *Language & Meaning* work is *turning it up* and *turning it down*, which refers to language that intensifies or plays down the overall idea expressed by a segment of text.<sup>15</sup> There are many ways of doing this, which I explored with students. If the idea the text is conveying is that someone is scared, using specific vocabulary like “trembled” or “terrified” *turns it up*, whereas using the word “nervous” might *turn it down*.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This terminology was adapted from the SFL and FGA terms *polarity* and *force*.

<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to say for certain whether things are examples of *turned up/down* language in decontextualized examples, but for the purposes of illustration that facilitates understanding of the concept, I am offering some

Certain modifying words or phrases such as “very” and “somewhat” are examples of turned *up/down language* respectively. Adding details can do this too, such as saying someone “trembled like a tree in the wind.” Identifying *turned up/down language* can help readers identify the important ideas an author took extra effort to express, and offers opportunities to explore many literary devices.

This is a cursory overview of a small sample of terms from a novice perspective that is rooted in experience using FGA with elementary school narratives. It is far from an exhaustive explanation of these terms and their uses, but it serves to orient the reader to the linguistic concepts explored in this study, and to the way I thought and talked about them. It also gives the reader an idea of how FGA differs from traditional grammar<sup>17</sup> in its approach to the study of language. Most importantly, it orients the reader to terminology that facilitates the metalanguage, or talk about language; these terms allow us to name aspects of language explicitly and specifically with meaningful labels. Schleppegrell (2013) sums up the importance of the FGA terminology (or “SFL metalanguage”) in the overall FGA approach:

The SFL metalanguage is a meaning- or content-oriented metalanguage, providing a vocabulary for raising language awareness that can be linked to the purposes for which language is being used and the goals of the speaker/writer. Its meaning-exemplifying language provides a mode of inquiry for students, as it puts wording into categories of meaning, allowing students to abstract from specific instances to reflect on the properties of the systems of language. This enables students to explore the choices speakers and writers make, unpacking text to talk about meaning and recognizing patterns in language. (Schleppegrell, 2013, p. 164)

**Pedagogy.** There is more to FGA than the SFL terminology, though. Moreover, a linguistic approach to supporting readers is not unique to FGA; other instructional approaches

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possibilities. The tension between the difficulty and necessity of illustrating these concepts with decontextualized text is a topic I discuss in Chapter 6.

<sup>17</sup> My experience learning FGA involved a tension between what I knew about traditional grammar and what I was learning about SFL; I often desired tidy analogs across the two systems, but the difficulty in finding those, especially once the sentences become more complex, points to what is unique about what FGA offers a study of language.



have explored how examination of a text's language can support comprehension for struggling readers and ELLs. Some have looked at how awareness of text structure can support comprehension of text (see Carrell, 1985; Wijekumar, Meyer, & Lin, 2012; Praveen & Premalatha, 2013). Some have looked at the tracking of anaphoric references as students read (see Flanigan, 1995; Parish & Perkins, 1984). Some have worked on semantic ambiguity training (see Brandao & Oakhill, 2005; Yuill & Oakhill, 1988; Zipke, Ehri, and Cairns, 2009). Pedagogy, however, includes activities, roles, and participation structures.

Again, this is a developing area in the FGA research that is still being explored in different contexts, but the intentions of an FGA pedagogy are guided by research on language learning that have practical implications. Schleppegrell (2013) explains what guided the *Language & Meaning* work, and hence, this dissertation study:

The key principles that guide the work reported here are a focus on interaction in the context of shared experience of reading a text, using a meaningful metalanguage to read and revisit the text, and building from reading to writing through rich discussion. The metalanguage supports comprehension by providing learners with tools for parsing language into meaningful constituents and recognizing what goes together to make meaning. (p. 165)

The *Language & Meaning* work using FGA in classrooms emphasized that students should work in small groups with specific segments of the text to apply the ideas about language that the class was exploring. For instance, if the class were learning about different *process types*, it would be important that students return to a familiar text, that they talk about specific segments of that text in small groups, that these groups identify the *processes* in those segments and connect them to the meaning of the segments, and that they share their group's idea with the whole group in a synthesis piece during which the teacher would facilitate further discussion of the text's language and connect the talk about language to the instructional goal. That was my guiding framework as I designed the units in this study.

Schleppegrell (2013) underscores that the rationale behind this design lies in the importance of student social interaction, raising consciousness about language, and the facilitative attributes of SFL; she connects this rationale to three “currents” (p. 154) in second language acquisition (SLA) research. First, sociocultural perspectives are driving research on SLA and emphasizing the need for social interaction and participation to learn language because “Language is learned through engagement in activities that enable participants to use the language resources they have in interaction, which in turn allows them to come to know and use new language resources” (p. 154). Second, emergentist perspectives build on the sociocultural model by linking the social and cognitive work involved in language acquisition. This perspective asserts that “language development involves changes in learners’ emerging linguistic systems as they adapt in response to new experiences and feedback” (p. 155) that they encounter in social interactions. Third, the SFL theory, which I have described above, is prominent in current SLA research. Schleppegrell underscores the idea that fostered the current pedagogical design of FGA: “A key aspect of [the SFL] perspective is that interaction in the context of shared experience enables learners to come to know the linguistic systems and develop their potential to participate” (p. 155).

**Elegant, efficient instruction for ELLs.** In this way, the FGA participation structures described above allow students to use language to learn about language, which further facilitates their language use. The details of the novel terminology, I feel, often overshadows the elegance of this design. Halliday’s SFL terms opened new frontiers for linguistic analysis, but the adaptation of those terms by FGA allow them to facilitate talk about language for people who don’t study language professionally. And it is that talk about language that facilitates language acquisition for ELLs, while also supporting them with school content by making the language

features of academic work more explicit for them. It is remarkable how efficiently the FGA pedagogy addresses so many aspects of ELL instruction; consideration of two of these key aspects illustrates its usefulness.

The first example is oral language. The FGA pedagogy meshes well with guidelines for ELL oral language development, which we know to be intimately linked to literacy achievement as well. The opportunities for verbal interaction that are built into the pedagogy create just the sorts of opportunities the experts are calling for:

ELLs also must have ample opportunities for authentic and functional use of English. Learning the elements of a language is very useful; but without extensive use (comprehending and producing the language), it is very difficult—perhaps impossible—to acquire high levels of proficiency. Interactions with teachers and fellow students may be open-ended or may encourage more complex linguistic attributes, preferably both. (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 13)

FGA offers such interactions with peers and teachers, and involves both open-ended talk about text and attention to complex linguistic attributes. Often in the analysis of text we juxtapose the language features of the text against the “ordinary” language we use orally to express the same idea, which helps students use and think about both types of language. In fact, both Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) and Anthony (2008) emphasize the need to focus on “expressive language” (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 13) or “output” (Anthony, 2008, p. 473) in ELL education, rather than focusing only on the presentation of teacher speech and text as “receptive language” (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 13) or “input” (Anthony, 2008, p. 472). Again, FGA addresses both needs by helping to make the “input” more accessible through analysis of its key features, and by creating a setting for students to express “output” in a scaffolded setting.

The second example is academic language. Research on ELLs emphasizes the important role of academic language in their success or failure in schools. Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) define academic language as “the language associated with schools; the language of texts

and formal writing. It consists primarily of the language functions needed for academic content and requires use of higher-order thinking skills” (p. 15).

Academic language is challenging for ELLs in two ways. First, understanding it is a requirement for being able to grapple with academic content. It is a “fundamental challenge” (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a, p. 61) ELLs face in efforts to succeed in school. Second, school is the only place for ELLs to learn academic language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a; Schleppegrell, 2013). Because of this latter point, ELLs who become fluent in conversational English (and possibly “pass out” of additional language support in some contexts) still struggle with the academic language of schooling (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a; Schleppegrell, 2004).

In spite of its importance, Coleman and Goldenberg (2010a) note that the research base on instruction for learning academic language is sparse. However, one of the “promising directions” (p. 62) they cite is Schleppegrell’s work with the FGA pedagogy (Schleppegrell, 2001 as cited in Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a) because of the emphasis it puts on syntax and text structures, rather than stopping at the specialized vocabulary of the different content areas. They underscore Schleppegrell’s points about academic language, noting that students might know the definitions of specific vocabulary, but still not understand its use in content-specific discourse (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a).

The tension this creates for teachers lies in how to focus their instruction, especially for classrooms that are not made up of primarily ELLs. Many content area teachers do not view themselves as language teachers and resist straying from their content area material (Yoon, 2010). Reciprocally, we cannot expect language teachers to cover grade-level content they do not specialize in, which could result in an impoverished curriculum for ELLs. Although

Coleman and Goldenberg (2009, 2010a-c) spend several articles writing about the various areas where ELLs need support in the classroom, they also caution that:

Educators must take care that ELD [English language development] does not displace instruction in academic content. Content-based ELD, which is driven by the ELD standards, does not replace content instruction driven by the content standards. In other words, just because an ELD lesson is about a science topic does not mean it meets the requirements for standards-based science instruction in that grade level. A sheltered lesson makes standards-based content instruction accessible. A content-based ELD lesson has language as a focus, but uses a content area as the medium. This type of lesson is not the same as standards-based content instruction. (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a, p. 64)

Here is where the elegance of the FGA pedagogy becomes so powerful. FGA pedagogy can be used with grade-level content area work (as it is in this study) to help ELLs work with the academic language of grade-level content area texts in supportive contexts that also feature many interactive participation structures to foster oral language development. The participation structures and metalanguage facilitate a nexus of content instruction, academic language instruction, and oral language development. Moreover, addressing these three issues together could be the missing solution to the dilemma about how to support text comprehension for ELLs. The previous section of this review highlighted that this is a gap in the research on ELL literacy instruction, and Coleman and Goldenberg (2010b) note that “here is where the gaps between English Learners and English speakers become increasingly large (p. 107). I propose that the FGA pedagogy could be the instructional approach that fills this gap in the research on ELL literacy instruction.

That said, this pedagogical theory is still underdeveloped in terms of practical definition and empirical support, in part because of the wide variety of scholastic contexts that exist. Moore and Schleppegrell (in press) note that “the forms and features of academic language vary by task, subject matter, and grade level, so those who want to support children’s development of

academic language need to situate that support in particular contexts of use and in the service of content area learning” (p. 1). Such support has been situated in particular contexts, which we will see in the following review of empirical work, but there are still many contexts to explore.

### **Empirical Studies of FGA Applications**

Martin (2009) described the ways functional linguists in Australia expanded their research from a focus on writing support for primary school ELLs during the 1980s to writing support for secondary school ELLs and ELLs in the workplace during the 1990s. Since then, FGA has been applied in several educational contexts in the United States. More branching out needs to occur to include different grade levels and scholastic contexts, but the work faces challenges, particularly in North American contexts, where there are larger populations, weaker researcher-practitioner relationships, and a more fragmented FGA educator presence (Hyon, 1996). A look at the extant research illustrates where and how FGA has been used successfully, and underscore that this study’s application of FGA is unique and offers a needed rich description of planning and instruction for FGA pedagogy in a primary grade ELA context.

**University contexts.** Much of the work pedagogically applying SFL or FGA has been conducted with ELLs in higher education settings. For instance, Yasuda (2011) conducted a 15-week study on English writing instruction with 70 Japanese undergraduate students who were learning English as a foreign language. The instruction was rooted in SFL theory about genre, and thus involved an explicit linking of purpose, audience, and linguistic choice. Yasuda posits that this approach might be especially useful for foreign language learners, who often see their work as context free and classroom bound.

The instructional tasks in this study focused on email because it lent itself to many different contexts. For example, the instructor used two different emails to lead the class in an

analysis of field, tenor, and mode. This helped the students infer things about the purpose, the information, and the relationships communicated by the texts. The study used surveys, interviews, and pre-post email tasks as data. The results showed that students displayed greater skill and expressed greater confidence in email writing ability. Some of the students attributed this progress to linguistic knowledge and others noted an increased sense of contextual factors. The study underscores the idea that SFL serves to free constraints, rather than creating them (a way in which it has been criticized) because students grew in their awareness of the different linguistic choices available to them as they wrote emails.

In another study of university ELLs, Mohan and Beckett (2001) addressed SFL as a complement to content based literacy learning (CBLL) ideas. They note a lack of evidence that correction of grammatical forms is sufficient to help students learn content in a language, a sentiment expressed by Coleman and Goldenberg (2010a) in the previous sub-section. They posit that SFL responses—through recast—can serve as a way of modeling a linguistic resource, not just correcting a grammatical error.

The study was set in a university content-based language learning course during a unit of study on the human brain. The analyzed conversations took place during authentic student presentations on the brain. The researchers examined professor recasts and student restatements that expressed the idea that “No matter how old we are, *stimulating* and *challenging* our brain will *foster* our brain.” The results use specific transcript segments to show how students adopted the SFL linguistic moves of nominalization and summary in their own words, with the scaffolding that the professor’s recasts provided.

Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) looked at ways of using SFL to help graduate students write about research in their second language in order to address the gap between these students’

knowledge about their discipline and their ability to write about that knowledge. They highlight the fact that taking assertive stances in research writing is a challenging task for graduate students that is only more challenging when they are working within their second language.

To address this challenge, the researchers taught students about a specific area of SFL content—prosodies used to create authorial stances in research writing—by weaving the SFL content together with a framework to guide academic writing (“engagement framework,” Martin & White, 2005 as cited in Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011, p. 140). The objective was to show the students how “different lexico-grammatical choices can be mobilized to realize the same rhetorical goals equally convincingly” (p. 148). They illustrated this through analysis of a corpus of introductory paragraphs from education research, using the analyses to highlight the linguistic choices authors made to realize expansive and contractive meanings that achieved similar objectives in the opening paragraph of their research writing. They found that applying such analysis pedagogically with the graduate students benefitted them because it “offered them a meta-language for talking about authorial voice, and developing the meta-language was an integral aspect of helping them reflect on the choices available to present an assertive stance in their advanced research writing” (p. 148).

Colombi (2009) focused on college level Spanish heritage speakers, who have developed Spanish at home in family settings, but haven’t had formal instruction. Many wanted stronger skills because it makes them valuable in employment settings. Colombi describes a pedagogy for these students that differs from the traditional L2 pedagogy, and closely resembles many ideas in the FGA pedagogy described earlier. It uses SFL to focus on the text in terms of content while attending to how the lexico-grammatical features of the text help in the very realization of textual content. Colombi describes a curriculum that is thematically organized, progresses in



instruction from simpler everyday genres to formal academic ones, and involves the careful study of model texts and the subsequent attempts at writing a similar genre. She asserts, as this dissertation does, that this sort of pedagogy can be applied to K-12 bilingual instruction.

**Secondary and middle school contexts.** Some research has applied an FGA pedagogy in secondary classrooms. MacNaught, Maton, Martin, and Matruglio (2013) were interested in using SFL (along with Legitimation Code Theory; LCT) to support secondary students' knowledge-building in content areas. The "Disciplinary, Knowledge and Schooling" project (DISKS) drew from SFL and LCT to analyze a corpus of video transcripts and classroom texts from secondary biology and ancient history classrooms in order to document linguistic features of current classroom practices. The SFL topics of focus were articulated as the "power trio" (p. 51) and involved the use of "power words" (which were related to the important vocabulary, ideas, theories, and people in the domain) used in "power grammar" (which involved linguistic choices such as nominalization and grammatical metaphor in order to densely pack information into text) into a "power composition" that followed a "semantic wave" (Maton, 2013, as cited in MacNaught, et al., 2013, p. 51) in which knowledge is unpacked to explain terms and ideas in concrete ways, then repacked to create the specialized discourse of the domain.

This project worked with secondary teachers in these content areas in a brief professional development endeavor in which teachers were trained to recognize the linguistic features of more and less successful student-produced texts in the corpus. Teachers then worked together to co-construct a joint text on a specific topic, mindful of their use of effective linguistic features. Then teachers enacted this same cycle of instruction in their classrooms, with the idea that it would support students' independent writing about the content in test essays. This article looks at one biology teacher's work with his class. The data describes the work the class did together

and illustrates this description with segments of the transcribed talk, but the results are only implicative. Nonetheless, such research is encouraging for this type of linguistic work in classrooms.

Achugar and Carpenter (2012) designed a study with clearer measures of student outcomes. They were interested in using an FGA approach in secondary history classrooms to help students work with primary sources. In an effort to help students read these texts the way historians read these texts, the researchers sought to make explicit the linguistic features that historians consider when examining primary sources.

After two phases of work with teachers, including professional development and ongoing collaborative design of three focal lessons, the researchers observed the enactment of these lessons and drew from one lesson to characterize the work in this article. They describe the pedagogical design in which teachers scaffold student reading of the primary source through working with limited segments from the document, examining wording and choices at the sentence level, using metalanguage to name these choices, providing students with guided and independent practice opportunities, and linking the work to the larger historical issues being studied. After a sample of transcripts from one lesson, the article turns to a description of the results on the student writing measures. They found that student performance improved on writing tasks that asked them to summarize the primary source, draw inferences from the primary source, and cite the primary source as evidence. (Different students improved in different areas.) Interestingly, they found a smaller improvement for the ELLs in the classes, which they hypothesize could be due to ELLs having an already-enhanced awareness of linguistic features in their efforts to work successfully with text in their second language.

Schleppegrell and Achugar (2003) assert the importance of learning about features of content-area language because it differs from the everyday language ELL students are often learning. They are critical of content-based instruction (CBI) approaches to ESL teaching that emphasize mainly graphic organizers and vocabulary, with no explicit discussion of the language used in the content area. In this case study of middle school history instruction, the researchers use observation, student interviews, and text analysis from one teacher's class to identify the challenges students face in making sense of the language and how FGA can be used to make things clearer. The researchers videotaped complete instructional units and context over a three-month period and analyzed the text being used and standards being addressed. Although attention was on tasks students had to accomplish and artifacts they dealt with, the focus of the study became the primary means of instruction: the history textbook.

The results present a "set of tools" that teachers can use to help students make sense of text despite its problematic features. They suggest leading students in the analysis of an important segment of the text with a focus on how the information is conveyed and organized through the grammatical choices. They emphasize a *mindful* use of graphic organizers because such tools depend on the organization of the text, which is variable. They are clear that each lesson, even when working with one short passage, should be goal-driven. Although not formally presented here, the authors state that observational evidence seems to show ELLs getting better access to the content material through the use of these techniques. They emphasize that an FG approach does not simplify the material, but rather raises language awareness in students.

Christie (2005) ties the language awareness of students to the language awareness of teachers, using assessment of student writing to illustrate what an FG lens can bring to

instruction. The study examined the grading of two pieces of writing by 14-year-olds on a standardized writing exam and found the guides for graders to be unspecific and unrelated to linguistic features. On the exam the highest score was 7. One text was graded 7+ and the other 7-. Christie reexamined the texts, using an SFL lens to articulate why one text was deemed superior. She analyzed each for subtle differences that account for the different grades. The conclusions were that in the higher-rated piece, the theme better matched what is subconsciously valued and there was subtle linguistic sophistication, though this was not specified by the grader. If these issues are unpacked and taught, the author argues, our children's writing would improve and success on tests would be better. FG "provides a way in" (p. 20), she argues.

**Elementary school contexts.** Some researchers are trying to apply FG pedagogical ideas with younger students. Gebhard, Harman, and Seger (2007) supported the efforts of an elementary school teacher who worried about the test performance of her ELL students, but was critical of the repeated test practice that leads to exclusive internalization and misapplication of test-taking strategies. The teacher felt that the students struggled to understand the academic register. The article describes some examples of what makes academic English hard, in SFL terms.

To prepare students for a persuasive writing task on the test, the teacher's project focused on a letter writing campaign to get recess reinstated. Instruction consisted of a free write, a group write, a return to students' own text thinking about specific features highlighted in the group write, and one-on-one meetings. The work of one particular ELL student made up the data. The article provides samples from the student of focus, highlighting successful features of the work that illustrate the application of SFL knowledge. No information about the district test performance is provided, however.

Gebhard and colleagues (Gebhard, et al., 2011) merged two area of research on supporting ELL university students—SFL research and Web 2.0 technology—and applied them in a primary school context. They explain that Web 2.0 technology (which involves social computing practices such as wikis, blogs, and the like) has been established as a strong medium for teaching and learning for ELLs at the University level, and assert that there needs to be more exploration of its benefits for elementary-aged ELLs. In this study, the classroom teacher and a university research assistant taught 19 second-grade students (14 of whom were Spanish-dominant ELLs) the required content-area genres<sup>18</sup> in two unique ways. First, they used blogging as the avenue for all the writing. They cite research that has shown how blogging can instill a sense of authenticity and wide audience awareness in (much older) ELL writers. Second, the educators used SFL constructs to help the students become aware of the field, tenor, and mode of their different writing assignments, and how posting these to the blog affected these constructs. The back and forth conversations that were possible in this medium added another layer to this writing work. The instructors encouraged the class to attend to the genre features of the posts and many addressed problematic choices for the genre, such as signing a letter to Bill Gates with “love” (Gebhard, et al., 2011, p. 293). Analysis of the blog posts also showed how students used the medium as a way to construct and maintain the social status of their relationships. The 22-month project wanted data to look closely at each curricular unit, including teaching materials, video of teaching sessions, and students’ final writing products. The goal was to examine the use that the class made of the blog as a pedagogical tool for giving and receiving feedback, and to document the sense students made of genre-based instruction.

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<sup>18</sup> The five genres studied over the year were letters, recounts, informational reports, arguments, and explanations in response to literature.

In this article, the researchers report on an ethnographic study of one student. It includes a rich description of her family background, her academic profile, and her social position in the classroom. They analyzed her writing within and across the different genres through her classroom blog entries and found that her metalinguistic awareness increased, leading to the use of “more varied and complex clause structures, a greater control over tense and modality, and a better understanding of the differences between oral and written discourse” (p. 289). They also found that the student used the blog for many different social purposes, which required her to expand her repertoire of linguistic resources. Most dramatically, they found that her test scores improved and her status moved out of the “at-risk” category in reading.

Two other studies came out of the *Language & Meaning* work that led to this dissertation study. As I described above, Schleppegrell (2013) links the FGA pedagogy to current perspectives on language instruction. Later in the article, however, she uses data from the project’s classroom research to “show how teachers situated talk about language in the curricular context and used it to support their larger instructional goals” (p. 158). She analyzed the metalanguage from transcript segments in which students talk about the *grammatical mood* and *speech functions* in a narrative text. The student talk about language was compelling and sophisticated in many ways, but most importantly it resulted in students understanding the themes in the texts (the curricular goal) and the different linguistic mechanisms for expressing meanings that created those themes (the language learning goal). In addition, it raised student awareness of their own language use. What is most exciting for this dissertation study, however, is that these teachers were novices to FGA and had no background in linguistics. They were able to make use of the FGA pedagogy in different ways, and even adaptations resulted in beneficial student talk about language and content.

Moore and Schleppegrell (in press) focused on the same idea that content instruction and language instruction can occur simultaneously with the help of the FGA terminology that facilitates metalanguage. The article makes several major points about the metalanguage that are helpful for extending this line of work in practical contexts. First, the terminology we choose to work with depends on the content, just as it does with work on academic language. For example, a discussion of symbolism or personification is not necessary in a science class the way it is in a literature class; similarly, certain FGA terminology is more or less helpful with different content. Second, the SFL terms were modified for this work, both by the researchers and the teacher, which is important since the SFL terminology can create resistance to the approach if teachers feel overwhelmed by the specialized vocabulary or struggle to see how it connects with content-area concepts (such as literary technique) that they are familiar with using in instruction. Third, the terminology was something that facilitated discussion of language (i.e., metalanguage), rather than something that spurs pedantic exercises of classification of language samples. This is important because this is precisely how FGA adds to our resources for language instruction, by weaving it into content instruction through talk about the content's language. Fourth, use of the specific terminology ebbed and flowed in different stages of the unit work, but the initial work with metalanguage facilitated students' engagement with the text in rich, deep ways, then scaffolded their writing about the text. This piece is a vivid illustration of developing ways to think about FGA in ELA contexts in elementary school.

**Teachers and FGA.** Some of the work on FG pedagogy acknowledges the importance of teacher professional development. Achugar, Schleppegrell, and Oteíza (2007) describe three professional development settings in which they worked with teachers around an FGA pedagogy. The first was the California History project (see Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteíza, 2004), which

catalyzed the others. The researchers were brought into an already-established group trying to increase teacher knowledge about history; their contributions made the educators aware of the idea of genre. Initially, the teachers simply shared this information with students, rather than using it to refine their practices in any ways. Further professional development, though, helped teachers see how they could analyze text with their students to make the meaning clearer.

This work inspired another project when Achugar became involved with a research endeavor in Pennsylvania, *The Institute for Learning: Disciplinary Literacy in History*. We read about this work (Achugar & Carpenter, 2012) and its beneficial effects on student writing, but it is important to underscore that it also contained a professional development aspect for teachers. The professional development helped the secondary history teachers, who were experts at reading primary sources, become aware of the linguistic analysis they were doing unconsciously with these texts, in order to facilitate their instruction of students working with such texts. FG is a tool for teaching others to read the text in this way.

The third project resulted, in part, from Oteiza's move to Washington State, where she looked at an often-ignored area: second language writing in academic contexts. Researchers were concerned that writing in most high school language classes focused on supporting oral language development. Teaching practice, therefore, entailed the grammatical correction of casual interactions. This led to the "contradictory practices of foregrounding 'everyday' uses of language while insisting on 'formal' conventions" (p. 19). Oteiza drew on the FG approaches to develop new classroom practices in this realm. The work showed teachers how to help second language learners more effectively realize their intended meanings, which contrasted starkly with the simple error corrections traditionally done in writing instruction. It also provided them a different lens through which to assess student writing, which focused on organizational



structures of essays, paragraphs, and sentences. This lens helped them view the success of student writing outside of the level of mastery of formal conventions. It was an answer to Christie's (2005) call for teacher awareness of what makes writing successful, which in turn spurs genre-based instruction.

In another look at professional development around FGA, Gebhard (2010) discusses how little research is happening on ELL education, despite much legislation about it. She asserts that this results in an underprepared teaching force. After spending time describing the educational applications begun in Australia, Gebhard offers three examples of teacher education involving SFL, adding two Massachusetts-based examples to the California History Project described above. The Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition (ACCELA) Alliance is a district/university partnership that has produced several studies using SFL to both design instruction and to analyze the collected data.<sup>19</sup> The findings suggest that ELLs gain both disciplinary and linguistic knowledge from this type of work. Another Massachusetts-based program led by Brisk and Zisselsberger (2010, as cited in Gebhard, 2010) conducted professional development with eleven Boston teachers to teach writing to their students. They reported that teachers gained confidence, but also needed to be reminded not to be overly-prescriptive. Within these encouraging lines of research, Gebhard acknowledges the depth of the professional development, and cautions against prepackaged curriculum for ELL instruction that doesn't give teachers deep knowledge of the SFL theory of language and the use and flexibility of its constructs.

Aguirre-Munoz, Park, Amabisca, and Boscardin (2008) also discuss how the increasing ELL population poses new challenges for teachers, and emphasize the need for professional development that raises teacher consciousness about language. They assert that many teachers

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<sup>19</sup> One example is the Gebhard, Shin, and Seger (2011) study described in this review.

are confused about how to instruct ELLs, and that students suffer as a result of teacher confusion. Although some ELL instructional techniques are important to maintain, they say, a focus on academic language is not happening in ELL education, even though the demands of language and concepts grow each grade level.

The goal in this study was to help teachers analyze student texts and provide instruction in linguistic resources to help students. The study used four training modules for teachers focused on a genre and the field, tenor, and mode associated with it. Measures were pre-post tests on the evaluation of student writing, teacher observations, and teacher interviews. The results showed a shift in teachers' evaluation and planning practices toward FG approaches. Teacher change was not consistent across teachers or schools, but 2/3 of teachers implemented training materials in their classrooms. Nonetheless, the researchers underscore that this approach requires administrative support and an increase in teacher linguistic knowledge.

Schleppegrell and Go (2007) more clearly explicate details of such an approach as they link the ideas of assessment and instruction in writing. They state that writing is difficult for students and teachers alike, but that an SFL framework can serve to show students what they are doing well and which linguistic features are associated with the task at hand and need to be used. Like Christie (2005) in her study of two standardized writing test responses, they point out that the same features that make SFL a useful analytical research tool—the linking of meaning and structure—can be applied to children's text for teaching purposes. To illustrate this the study uses writing samples from four fifth- and sixth-graders who are from Vietnam and spending their first year in the United States.

Responding to ELL rudimentary text is extremely hard for teachers and they often focus on correcting student errors; a focus on errors, however, is not helpful and can break stamina.

The researchers assert that three questions can be used to guide evaluation:

1. What is the text about? (topic)
2. How is judgment/evaluation expressed? (perspective)
3. How is the text organized? (structured)

The answers to these questions should be guided by an SFL perspective that looks at grammar as choices, not rules. The researchers illustrate the approach in a plethora of ways, using writing samples from the four students. In their findings, they emphasize that whole text is needed for students to learn about tenses and other choices for different parts of the genre, and that more risks will lead to more errors, but richer writing.

In summary, the foci and methodologies of these studies show that the research on pedagogical applications of FGA is interesting, unique, and full of potential. Before this teaching experiment, no published studies used FGA as a scaffold for ELLs participating in TBDs, but the idea is theoretically sound, as illustrated by the many studies that show FGA serving as a useful tool for student engagement with text in a novel way. It is further supported by the recently published work by Schleppegrell and colleagues (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press; Schleppegrell, 2013) with ELA content in the primary grades. That work has shown that FGA pedagogy “supports the situated and contextual language learning the current research in education and L2 acquisition calls for, while also supporting disciplinary goals and activities in English language arts” (Schleppegrell, 2013, p. 153). This study will add to that growing body of empirical work by using an FGA pedagogy in the service of a TBD.

## **Summary**

This review of the scholarship on TBDs, comprehension instruction for ELLS, and FGA's pedagogy supports the rationale for this dissertation study. Studies of TBDs have shown them to be beneficial for students' work with text, even providing evidence of comprehension benefits; in spite of evidence that certain TBD approaches show positive impacts with ELLs, we still have questions about how best to support ELLs' text comprehension, and know that they need extra support to develop oral language and academic language; and FGA's developing instructional norms create space for oral language development and academic language instruction. Linking these lines of research by designing an FGA-supported TBD in the service of supporting ELLs' text comprehension is relevant, timely work that will contribute to all three areas of research.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This study is a teaching experiment that describes a design for text-based discussion (TBD) units supported by Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) and examines the affordances and challenges of such an approach. A teaching experiment is a study of a recorded series of teaching episodes between a teacher and one or more students (Steffe & Thompson, 2000). The records of practice serve as data for both the adjustment of ongoing teaching episodes during the experiment and for the analysis of the series of episodes at the conclusion of the experiment.

The teaching experiment methodology allowed me to pursue my research questions within a constructivist perspective on teaching-and-learning, which emphasizes the ongoing, situated context of an episode. I was interested in how to develop FGA-supported TBD units, and how different aspects of those units might facilitate or hinder the group in co-constructing meaning from text during the different stages of the units. Examining the discourse in various participation structures allowed me to identify affordances and challenges of the instructional design as a context for learning, rather than as a stimulus intended to provoke a specified response. Steffe and Thompson (2000) assert that experimental methodologies position students as the recipients of treatments, rather than people who “participate in the coconstruction of the treatments in the context of teaching episodes” (p. 271). They explain that teaching experiments, on the other hand, were developed to address limitations many were finding in this experimental methodology. Rather than viewing student contributions as responses to my teaching or my curriculum, I viewed the students’ contributions, my teaching, and the curriculum as elements

working in concert to create teaching-and-learning episodes that can be studied to reflexively inform these elements and to describe the gestalt they create.

### **What are Teaching Experiments?**

This methodological choice, particularly for this context, warrants further explanation; a quick search for the phrase “teaching experiment” in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database brings up 98 articles and none of them have an English language arts (ELA) focus; the methodology developed in the 1980s in the study of mathematics education and remains fully rooted in that realm. Nonetheless, the potential for what a teaching experiment can offer in terms of data and the theoretical perspectives on learning that undergird it compel me to characterize this study as a teaching experiment for four reasons: it involves a recorded series of teaching episodes; it answers questions about the ongoing development of understanding; it values the insights of the teacher; and it sees merit in ongoing iterations. Thus, I am making an initial attempt to invite this methodology into the ELA realm and to extend ideas about what kinds of questions teaching experiments can answer.

### **What Kinds of Questions Can a Teaching Experiment Answer?**

Researchers in mathematics education have used teaching experiments to answer questions about student’s “mathematical realities” (Steffe & Thompson, 2000, p. 267) and how those evolve in an instructional setting. Traditionally, they are used in efforts to “formulat[e] explanations of children's mathematical behavior” (Cobb & Steffe, 1983, p. 83). The emphasis in the literature on teaching experiments is that in acting in the role of teacher, a different sort of data is gathered, and that these data are crucial for drawing the most accurate conclusions about

student learning. The teaching experiment values looking closely at the process, not just applying theory to the outcome measures.

In this study, I am broadening the scope of questions that a teaching experiment can answer in several ways. First, I venture that it can formulate explanations of children's literacy behavior. Research on reading strategies began in similar ways to the cognitive interviews in the mathematics education research: researchers gave students tasks in laboratory settings and applied theories of comprehension development to hypothesize about students' reading behavior (Pressley, 1998). As the research on reading strategies progressed, however, it eventually ended up back in classrooms, testing methods and curricula that grew out of these hypotheses. In this way, I argue that many of these later studies were "teaching experiments" even if they didn't use that label. To illustrate this, consider that Cobb and Steffe (1983) explain:

Our methodology for exploring the limits and subtleties of children's construction of mathematical concepts and operations is the primary object of attention... We argue that, in such an exploration, there is no substitute for experiencing the intimate interaction involved in teaching children. (p. 83)

The above quotation could be set in the context of many of studies of reading instruction if we substituted "children's construction of mathematical concepts and operations" with "children's construction of various levels of meaning from text."

I propose that teaching experiments can help us answer questions about the utility of new instructional approaches through a close look at the teacher's instructional reality. We cannot accurately evaluate the merit of an approach (particularly an approach in its nascent stages of development) through student outcome measures alone, whether those data are qualitative or quantitative. Even when we use respected theory to formulate a hypothesis about how the lessons got students to their "end results," it is impoverished. More robust assessments of a curriculum or approach are informed by the ongoing process of design and enactment that occur

with students and teachers and incorporate understandings from each preceding stage of design and enactment. This helps us identify affordances and challenges, or, in other words, where our theories about the curriculum or approach's potential were accurate or misguided.

In summary, teaching experiments historically focus on students' development of mathematical understandings, but I assert that they can be used equally well to investigate the multiple educational realities in multiple subject areas. The theoretical underpinnings of the teaching experiment lie in constructivist notions that understanding occurs in a social context and that, therefore, a researcher can best study a student's mathematical understandings through being part of that context, as the teacher. I believe the same is true for understanding students in literacy contexts and for examining teaching practice in enacting instruction.

### **How Are Questions Investigated?**

On a theoretical level, the teaching experiment investigates questions through constant revision of models. Initial teaching-and-learning interactions are structured, along with a certain model for how the students will take up the interaction. After enactment, the students' actual thinking (evident in words and behaviors) are held up against the model and if there is dissonance, the model is adjusted to encompass the new data. The adjusted model informs the design of the next teaching-and-learning interaction and the cycle repeats, resulting in progressively more refined and accurate models of student thinking (Steffe & Thompson, 2000). On a practical level, the teaching experiment gathers data from many teaching-and-learning sessions, and draws on analysis of transcribed discourse, memos reflecting teacher thinking, students' written work, and other information about the students resulting from a teacher-student relationship.



The role of researcher-as-teacher serves to join the theory and practice and is positioned as a key attribute of the teaching experiment methodology (Cobb & Steffe, 1983). The idea is that as part of the interactive event, the teacher-researcher has insight for the analysis that is unique because ongoing student work and the adjustments that work provokes are as helpful as theory for understanding the teaching-and-learning episodes.

These modified models, informed by student thinking, affect the next instructional setting, and I am interested in how and why a teacher would modify the instructional setting within the context of enacting an FGA-supported TBD. The teacher's actions on and with the planned instruction inform answers to questions about how this work is done (research question 1) and what affordances and challenges it presents (research question 2).

### **How are my results grounded in this method?**

This background brings me to this specific study. There are developing theories about how to use FGA in different educational realms, and its use in supporting text comprehension and ELL literacy and language development are both part of those theories. This study is an initial attempt to consider the ecological validity of those theories, framed by two practical research questions that ask how we might *do* this work and how we might maximize its affordances and overcome its challenges. In other words, I am testing a model for instruction.

Cobb and Steffe (1983) explain this methodological process through a teaching lens:

Obviously, to communicate successfully with children, there must be some fit between the intended and the actual meanings. The likelihood that a teaching communication will be successful is increased whenever the teacher's actions are guided by explicit models of the children's mathematical realities. From this perspective, the activity of teaching involves a dialectic between modeling and practice. The teacher's actions are formulated within the framework of his or her current models. The plausibility of these models is in question when the teacher attempts to make sense of observations of the children's behavior in subsequent encounters.” (p. 86)

In the case of this study, I am focused on developing models of supportive instruction. I began with a conjecture that the final draft of the unit plan was going to be a fruitful route to the group's co-construction of rich meaning that connects to the unit's big idea. The unit plan was my first model, which is explicated in my description of what I will say and do, the student understanding I intend that to lead to, and the concrete work prompt students accomplish in pursuit of this understanding. However, I had to continually adjust this model when I saw the plan required adjustment, sometimes due to practical circumstances (e.g., absences, interruptions, mis-estimations of task time) and sometimes due to flaws in the lesson plan (e.g., an idea that didn't work well with students, an instructional task that I realized was more cumbersome when I was actually doing it). Furthermore, as I adjusted the model (perhaps several times) I carried this new model to the next unit because I certainly wasn't going to enact what I knew to be unsuccessful instruction. Therefore, I enhanced, adjusted, or otherwise "tweaked" unit plans, based on new conjectures for what should work, creating a new model for the next unit that was similarly tested and adjusted, informed by students' responses to the preceding instruction.

After the data collection was over, analyzing the different models—captured by my lesson plans, transcribed enactments, and reflective memos—I came up with a final model of what an FGA-supported TBD can look like and what its affordances and challenges are. This dissertation presents that model.

The primary difference in how I am using the teaching experiment methodology is in my unit of analysis. My results are grounded in my broader conception of a teaching experiment. In this study, I am less focused on an individual student's construction of meaning (though the data could be used in that way) than I am on the *group's co-construction* of meaning. The teaching experiment is as much about the teacher's thoughts and behaviors as the students' thoughts and

behaviors, and also as much about understandings constructed through group interaction as about an individual's cognition. Therefore, these can become the focus of analysis. The process of developing and continuously refining a model for instruction is analogous to doing so with a model for a student's mathematical understanding.

In summary, the teaching experiment methodology—what is examined and values—helped this study offer what it offers to the FGA and TBD research. Because of this methodology, I did not just analyze the TBD that I was intending to foster with this novel approach. Rather, I analyzed every step along the way, including the planning and design and the student's talk and work in pairs/ threesomes preceding the TBD. This included the analysis of moments that were unsuccessful and triggered revision, as well as moments that were surprisingly more powerful than I'd expected. Cobb and Steffe speak to how this wider swath of data can capture important data:

Some of our most humbling experiences have occurred when knowledge gained through theoretical analysis has failed to be of value in understanding children's mathematical realities. On the other hand, totally unexpected solutions by children have constituted some of our most exhilarating experiences. (Cobb & Steffe, 1983, p. 84)

In conclusion, the methodology is helpful for studying this new instructional approach because the planning and the enactment—which are co-dependent in classroom settings—can be examined together through the eyes of someone intimate with the work. Thus, this methodology allows for the study of not just the lesson plans, and not just the instruction, but the interplay of both, which is the work of teaching. As the teacher-researcher, I was uniquely positioned to analyze the ways these elements interacted, and could offer that insight. This methodology is valuable for studying instructional approaches because it “was designed for the purpose of eliminating the separation between the practice of research and the practices of teaching” (Steffe & Thompson, 2000, p. 301).

## Participants

The participants in this study were fourteen fourth-grade students at one public elementary school in a Midwest city. Ninety-six percent of the students were Arab-American, 89.6% of the students were ELLs, and 98.5% of the ELLs spoke Arabic as their first language. Ninety-two percent of the students qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch. English language learners (of varying proficiencies) participated because research on pedagogical applications of FGA have primarily focused on students who need linguistic support due to language or dialect backgrounds that differ from the language of schooling; to pilot the use of FGA in TBDs, it is logical to target students who have been a primary focus of research on FGA instruction. Students came from four classrooms and were selected using measures of comprehension levels and English language proficiency (see *Materials*), which teachers corroborated based on class performances. To strengthen the reliability of this study, I enacted the units of instruction with two groups of students who came from separate classrooms. I wanted to check my analysis across separate groups to see whether patterns noted in one group were also evident in the other; if they weren't, the patterns needed to be considered as idiosyncratic to that group of students and/or to the specific enactments that unfolded within that group. However, I matched the students according to comprehension levels and English language proficiency to make the groups as comparable as possible so that I was studying this approach in two comparable contexts that could be discussed together. Additionally, the student selections needed to comprise a range of comprehension abilities within groups because I was interested in how this approach would work with a variety of students, and how struggling comprehenders would participate in the work in heterogeneous groups. Therefore, after selection, both groups had two students who scored one

to two standard deviations above the mean (“advanced comprehenders”), two who scored at the mean (“typical comprehenders”), and three who scored at least one standard deviation below the mean (“struggling comprehenders”<sup>20</sup>) on the comprehension measure, and each of these students had a comparable student in the other group when considering measures of their comprehension ability and language proficiency together. Because classroom scheduling needs constrained the dimensions of this student matching,<sup>21</sup> and because there was a smaller pool of “advanced comprehenders” than anticipated, identifying perfect pairs was challenging. The final pairings, however, are reasonable, and when the GMRT-4 stanine scores are considered instead of raw scores, all but two of the pairings are identical (see *Table 3.1*).

I chose not to include students with serious decoding difficulties in this study because their comprehension skills may be so negatively affected by their decoding skills that they could not participate in the activities in a way that would be meaningful for the study. Similarly, I chose not to include students with only “basic” or “low intermediate” English language skills (ELPA scores of 4 or 5; see *Materials*) in this study because their limited English skills may hamper their ability to make use of all-English instruction.

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<sup>20</sup> In Chapter 7 I look closely at the participation of struggling comprehenders, so I want to underscore that I defined this subgroup as the students who scored at least one standard deviation below the mean on the GMRT-4.

<sup>21</sup> Each group could only draw from two of the four teachers because of classroom “specials” schedules. Students needed to be pulled out during regular classroom literacy time, not during art, gym, or music. Thus, each student needed a “match” identified from a pool of two classrooms, not all four.

Table 3.1 Group membership and corresponding GMRT-4 and ELPA scores

	GROUP 1				GROUP 2			
	Student name <sup>22</sup>	GMRT4 raw	Stanine (mean = 5; SD = 2)	ELPA	Student name	GMRT4 raw	Stanine (mean = 5; SD = 2)	ELPA
Advanced Comprehender	Mustafa	70	7	1	Alyssa	68	6	1
	Antonio	69	6	1	Riad	67	6	1
Typical Comprehender	Daniyah	48	5	3	Zeina	49	5	3
	Dimah	47	5	2	Ahlam	47	5	1
Struggling Comprehender	Asil	28	3	3	Kamel	28	3	3
	Rayanne	34	3	3	Farrah	34	3	3
	Adel	35	3	2	Ali	36	3	2

The selected students had varied language practices at home. A survey sent home to parents inquired about the language the students usually used with the parent, their siblings, and their friends. The responses (see *Table 3.2*) indicate a variety of language profiles combining mostly Arabic and English. The profiles do not appear related to student comprehension levels or ELPA scores.

<sup>22</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

Table 3.2 Group membership and student home language practices

<b>GROUP 1</b>				
	<b>Student name (ELPA score)</b>	<b>Language usually used with <u>parent</u> at home</b>	<b>Language usually used with <u>siblings</u> at home</b>	<b>Language usually used with <u>friends</u></b>
Advanced Comprehender	Mustafa (1)	Arabic	English	English
	Antonio (1)	English & Albanian	English	English
Typical Comprehender	Daniyah (3)	English	English	English
	Dimah (2)	English	English	English
Struggling Comprehender	Asil (3)	English	English	English
	Rayanne (3)	English	English	English
	Adel (2)	Arabic & English	Arabic & English	Arabic & English
<b>GROUP 2</b>				
	<b>Student name</b>	<b>Language usually used with <u>parent</u> at home</b>	<b>Language usually used with <u>siblings</u> at home</b>	<b>Language usually used with <u>friends</u></b>
Advanced Comprehender	Alyssa (1)	English	English	English
	Riad (1)	Arabic & English	English	English & Arabic
Typical Comprehender	Zaina (3)	Arabic & English	Arabic & English	English
	Ahlam (1)	Arabic	NA	English
Struggling Comprehender	Kamel (3)	Arabic	English	English
	Farrah (3)	English	English	English
	Ali (2)	English & Arabic	English	English

### Materials

The study used two formal student assessment measures. To form groups that were heterogeneous with respect to students' comprehension skills, the study administered the vocabulary and comprehension sections of the **Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT-4;** MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, & Dreyer, 2000). This assessment was designed to measure general reading achievement for diagnostic, instructional, evaluative, and reporting purposes. The reports on both the total test reliability and subtest reliability for this grade level are at

coefficients of 0.90 or above. According to Johnson and McCabe (2005), item development reports support the content validity of the measure, and intercorrelations between subtests and the total test support construct validity. The test is well suited to this study because it is norm-referenced, often used in educational research, and efficiently administered to large groups at this grade level.

Student language proficiency was determined by their scores on the district-administered English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), with corroboration of this proficiency level provided by the teachers. The ELPA exam, administered annually in the spring, seeks to measure the language proficiency of English language learners across the domains of listening, reading, writing and speaking. Students can score at one of five levels: Advanced Proficient (1), Proficient (2), High Intermediate (3), Low Intermediate (4), and Basic (5). The full technical report on the ELPA can be viewed at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Final\\_Acrobat7\\_317649\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Final_Acrobat7_317649_7.pdf) .

The reports on the total test reliability for each grade level range from 0.91 to 0.94. The test has also been measured for internal and external validity. Due to the statistical complexity and lengthy reporting required for validity reports, key paragraphs from the report are quoted in Appendix A of this proposal. Since this is the district-approved test and the technical report describes sufficient psychometric rigor, it is an efficient and appropriate choice for use in this study.

The texts chosen for this study needed to be both appropriately leveled for fourth-grade students and conducive to a persuasive prompt for the final writing task. Texts for the lessons in this study came primarily from two fourth-grade basal series, Open Court. One text selection (used for the first unit) is from the fifth grade Houghton Mifflin basal series because the



*Language & Meaning* research project that helped to inform this study's pedagogical application of FGA had successfully used the text before and it served as a touchstone text for many in the research group. The remaining units' texts came from the fourth-grade level of Open Court and Houghton-Mifflin reading series, to minimize the chance that students would have encountered the texts before since the school did not use this basal series (see *Table 3.3*). The study uses narrative texts for several reasons. First, most of the work done by the *Language & Meaning* research project had used narrative text. Second, the two prominent discursive approaches to comprehension instruction that most influenced the design of these units use narrative texts in their published research studies. Third, instructing students to read content area texts introduces content area knowledge as an additional variable that is not the focus of this study.

Other materials used in the study include typical teaching materials such as markers and chart paper, as noted in the lesson plans included in the appendices of this dissertation.

Table 3.3 Text titles, summaries, and unit writing prompts

Title	Summary	Writing prompt
La Bamba (Soto, 2005)	A fifth-grade boy named Manuel participates in a school talent show. He experiences many setbacks and successes during the experience.	Will Manuel volunteer for the talent show again next year?
McBroom and the Big Wind (Fleischman, 2005)	A large family living on a farm interacts with the wild prairie wind in ways that are helpful and harmful to them. This is a fantastical tale with a lot of humor.	Who was more powerful, the McBroom family or the wind?
The New Doctor (Paul, 2005)	A US-trained doctor opens a new medical clinic in a small South American village and a young girl named Lupe compares and contrasts the practices of modern medicine with the traditional practices she knows from apprenticing the village healer.	Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?
Marven of the Great North Woods (Lasky, 2005)	An eight-year-old boy named Marven moves to a lumber company's facility in the Great North Woods to work as a clerk. He is surrounded by new experiences, giant lumberjacks, and beautiful wilderness.	Will Marven want to stay in the Great North Woods or will he want to return home?
Toto (Moskin, 2005)	An eight-year-old boy named Suku lives in an African village and fears getting close to the nearby wild game reserve because of the wild animals that might wander out. But one morning he responds to the cries of an ensnared baby elephant who left his family to explore the world. Suku has to lead the baby home to the reserve.	Who changed more, Suku or Toto?

## Procedures and Data Collection

This dissertation examines the FGA-supported text-based discussion during two different stages of development: the planning and the enactment of the units. The examination is rooted in the two research questions:

- Q.1. How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?
- Q.2. What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?

I address the first question in a descriptions of *what* we did (i.e., how the units were structured, what the activities were like, which scaffolds were put in place to assist students as they worked, how different students participated in the work, etc.). I address the second question in a descriptions of *why* we did those things (i.e., rationales for the unit structures, activities, and scaffolds) and my reflections on *how* the work went (i.e., the problems we encountered, the most useful activities and scaffolds, my on-line revisions to the plans, how students responded to different aspects of the work, etc.).

### Planning

I planned the five units of instruction over one academic semester. I accessed basal series teacher manuals from a University of Michigan School of Education resource room and combed through the fourth-grade narrative texts. Grade level was the first criteria for choosing texts, as I was interested in using FGA in a way that could help make grade-level text accessible to all students. As I read through the narrative texts, the next criteria was whether or not they leaned themselves to a persuasive prompt for the culminating writing activity. This was the most challenging criteria to meet because many narrative texts told colorful, exciting stories, but didn't open a space for debate around the "big idea." Once I found seven texts, I began working

with each of them to see whether the third criterion was met, which was the salient presence of a language feature that would be accessible to novices in FGA. This criterion was actually dual-layered. All texts have language features that can be explored with FGA, as FGA is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, which is a comprehensive approach to analyzing language. However, the feature needed to be simple enough to serve as an entrée into FGA for students who had never worked with FGA terminology, but salient enough in the text to be present with frequency and contexts that helped students grapple with the text’s “big idea.”<sup>23</sup>

I began writing the units for all of these stories, constantly evaluating the instructional quality. I sent high-quality drafts to Drs. Mary Schleppegrell and Annemarie Palincsar, who led the *Language & Meaning* research group at the University. They guided my FGA choices, refined the particulars of my analyses, and offered feedback on the instructional content and moves. As the planning and refining occurred, I engaged in a tandem process of selecting five of the seven units I was working on, and putting the units in a logical order. Finally, the five units were drafted and finalized.

Before beginning the formal study, I conducted a pilot study with the first unit and a different group of seven fourth-graders from just one of the partnering classrooms. This pilot study used the text *La Bamba* for two reasons. First, it was going to be the opening text for the study, so it would be good to note any necessary changes as soon as possible. Second, it was the text unit that had gone through the most iterations and revisions,<sup>24</sup> so it would allow me to focus on another important purpose of the pilot study, which was testing and troubleshooting the instructional setting and recording equipment. Once the pilot study was complete, I made

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<sup>23</sup> For example, every text—indeed every sentence—has a *participant* in it, but explicitly identifying the participants in a text might not add anything to the students’ understanding of the “big idea.”

<sup>24</sup> *La Bamba* is a text that the *Language & Meaning* research group had worked with extensively, trying different approaches and observing their enactments in classrooms. This work had obviously informed my unit development.

revisions to the unit, refined the video and audio recording processes, and prepared for the actual study.

The data collected for examining the planning and design of FGA-supported TBDs are the unit plans for the five texts and my reflections on the planning process.

### **Enactment**

Over ten weeks,<sup>25</sup> I led two groups of seven fourth-graders in the study and discussion of five narrative texts. Both groups received essentially the same instruction, but because discussion is co-constructed by the participants, the units played out slightly differently between groups. We read, revisited, and discussed the texts, and students wrote a response to a persuasive prompt at the conclusion of each unit.

After each lesson, I wrote a reflective memo assessing the successes and challenges of the lesson enactment by focusing on the unit goal, student engagement in the tasks and discussion, and my feelings of comfort and efficacy with presenting the material and facilitating the group work. These memos serve to refine the development of an FGA-supported TBD by offering feedback on successful and challenging elements that were present across lessons.

The data collected for examining the enactment of FGA-supported TBDs are the recorded and transcribed lessons for each unit and my reflective memos written shortly after each lesson.

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<sup>25</sup> Originally the proposal outlined a five-week schedule for the study in which each unit took approximately one week (five days) to complete. School schedules, however, including the inability to meet with students on Fridays, many all-school assemblies, and several snow days caused the study to be much longer in duration. Additionally, two of the units spread the “Day 1” activities over two days when the pacing and group participation warranted it. However, both groups met on the same days, and if one group’s lesson was adjusted/cancelled, the other groups’ lesson was adjusted/cancelled too, to make sure students received the same instruction on the same days.

## **Data Analysis**

### **The Data**

The primary data in this study are the developed unit plans, the drafts that preceded them, my reflections on the design process, the recorded and transcribed lessons, and the corresponding reflective memos I wrote after each lesson enactment. I collected other data to triangulate my developing findings and accessed them as they were pertinent; these secondary data include a file of memos that I wrote to myself during the transcription process, teacher questionnaires about each of their participating students, brief parent questionnaires about student language use at home, post-study student interviews, and end-of-unit student writing. Additionally, I consulted the corresponding video/audio footage for transcript segments when questions about coding merited it. Below I describe the analyses of these data with respect to each chapter, but first I offer more about my analytic process to help establish the “authenticity and trustworthiness” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 211) of this study.

### **Efforts to Increase Validity and Reliability**

My analyses were rooted in my research questions. Although I employed “open coding” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) in most of my work with the transcripts, the research questions created a lens that guided this coding. This focus is necessary because reading through hours of student talk offers grist for many topics, and to increase the validity of my findings in terms of the research objectives, I needed to delineate what was informative for this study’s research questions and what was not. Therefore, when I refer to instances of open coding, it is with the implication that I coded for patterns in the data that described how we used Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) to support the text-based discussions (research question 1) and/or

what affordances and challenges I encountered by doing so (research question 2). Although there were other interesting data that held potential for exploring other topics (e.g., motivation in school, gender dynamics in small group work, the influence of cultural and religious beliefs on students' text comprehension) unless these data directly and consistently connected to our use of FGA to support TBDs, I did not code for them. Instead, I made use of data that facilitated a rich description of the approach, and that exemplified affordances and challenges that were present with enough consistency across both groups and all units to warrant discussion; it is this data that is informative for researchers and practitioners interested in pedagogical applications of FGA.

Focusing on the second research question also facilitated the validity of my findings in that I was not seeking to describe a perfect or tidy instructional context. I embarked on this study with a certain degree of skepticism about how successful it would be. I knew I had worked hard to understand some of the language features that FGA worked with, had seen teachers in the *Language & Meaning* project struggle to implement some of the work, and now I was attempting similar instructional endeavors as an FGA novice. Through coursework and research assistance, however, I had developed a belief in the theoretical underpinning of this approach, and review of empirical work using FGA helped me conceptualize its use for TBDs. These opposing perspectives helped me notice both the successes and struggles of the instruction and frame the study as a piece that would inform further design and inquiry. Therefore, the things that went “wrong” with the lessons were equally valid data for my research questions and I felt no temptation to overlook or minimize them.

Additionally, I sought to increase the reliability of the study through implementing many units with two separate but comparable groups. In a sense, this allowed me to replicate the work within the same study. I made sure that any findings held true across units and groups, and only

then did I consider a pattern “prevalent.” For every application of a code, I also listed the participant names involved to make sure codes were not associated only with certain students.

When I encountered counter-evidence, I thoroughly considered it to see whether it negated my coding scheme. I revised or let go of codes based on such consideration. If I decided that counter-evidence was connected to idiosyncratic circumstances that didn’t warrant a change to the coding scheme, I report on this counter-evidence and note those circumstances in my findings. The one exception to my cross-unit analytic process was my analysis of the metalanguage. For this analysis, I focused on individual units, given that different linguistic features and FGA terminology were used in each unit; nonetheless, I noted a few patterns in our challenges with the metalanguage across units and report on these patterns in my findings.

I was mindful about the transcript segments I selected for use in the dissertation. I selected the illustrative examples based on several criteria. I wanted examples that were typical; I wanted examples that were efficient, in that much of the context was evident and the reader required minimal outside explanation; and I wanted to show the different students talking in different groupings and contexts. Therefore I gathered examples based on the first two criteria by selecting the most typical and most efficient examples, and then I selected for the dissertation based on which students had been “heard” interacting thus far.

Qualitative work seeks to articulate an “understanding” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 212) and I made efforts in this study to validate the presented understanding of FGA-supported TBDs by describing the context in detail; triangulating my findings with multiple data sources; clarifying my researcher position through description of my theoretical orientations and relationship to the study; and recounting my methods, procedures, and decision-making



processes. These are steps endorsed by Corbin and Strauss (2008) for increasing the trust between the reader and writer of qualitative research.

### **A Description of the Open Coding Process**

As I initially assigned primary codes, I occasionally collapsed or parsed them, but mainly used the initial labels for the noticed pattern and captured as many examples as I identified. Next, I created files titled with the assigned code. I parsed text segments such that the context of the discussion was preserved. Because of this wide swath in parsing, occasionally segments were assigned multiple codes and were included in multiple files.

After the transcripts were coded into these files, I read through the included segments in each code file, to assess them again according to the larger developing coding scheme. I checked my initial coding by reevaluating each example and deciding whether or not it definitely belonged in this category. If it didn't, I removed it or moved it to another code file. If it was questionable, I moved it to another file for further evaluation. Once I had checked each segment included in a code file in this way, I read through them again to open-code for any distinguishing secondary codes in this group of segments. These secondary codes offered further description of the work, and also helped me decide whether the questionable segments did, in fact, belong in the code file. I examined secondary code files in the same way until I felt that a group of segments served as evidence for a single finding. Then I stopped sub-coding the data sets.

After following this procedure for each set of primary codes and developing secondary (and in some cases tertiary) codes, I returned to the transcripts to read over segments that had not been included in a code file. I considered these remaining segments in light of my refined coding scheme, and I considered them as a set to see whether they held anything in common that I had missed. When they did, this caused me to repeat the coding cycle with them.

## **Analyses by Chapter Topic**

In Chapter 4, I focus on the planning stage of the teaching experiment. This chapter is unique in that it focuses on my work planning the units and does not look at transcript data. Using the final unit plans, I describe the overall design of units by describing what was common across them despite focusing on different texts and making use of different FGA activities. Something to note in this analysis is that the patterns I describe in this part of the chapter did not arise spontaneously, but rather were intentional because the components and participation structures drew from FGA pedagogical theories. I describe them in this chapter to address the first research question. Subsequently, however, I describe patterns I noted in the planning process across units that were not intentional. Using the drafts that preceded the final unit plans and my own reflections on the process, I identified two themes in the planning and design process. First, the planning process was highly iterative. Second, using FGA in the units helped me in my understanding of the texts and how to use them with students. After noting these two themes in my reflections, I read over each unit again (both final and previous drafts) and coded the lesson plans for examples of these two patterns, then further coded the examples to add nuance to my findings. These codes identify specific affordance and challenges that arose in planning for this instructional approach.

In Chapters 5 - 7, I focus on the enactment stage of the teaching experiment. I describe the successes and struggles of the designed units when put to the test in an ecologically valid setting. I used Transana 2.53 (Woods & Fassnacht, 2012) to transcribe every minute of our work together—in both the groups of seven and in the pairs/threesomes—and wrote ongoing memos while transcribing. This file of memos served as a resource when I completed my open coding by helping me to see whether these patterns were present in some form during my initial

review of the data. I compared the final coding scheme to the transcription memos to see whether my codes were present there, and to see whether patterns I had noticed in my memos had been neglected. This served to triangulate the findings from my open coding process. This memo process also prevented notable-but-isolated moments from distracting me from larger patterns as I transcribed because I knew they were collected for review later.

After completing the transcription of all of the video and audio data, I began coding the transcripts. I reviewed the transcripts for the same “day” in every unit in succession, rather than reading through each unit in succession. Thus, the focus was on the participation structure and activities associated with each lesson, rather than a micro-analysis of each unit. In other words, I was looking for what were common participatory behaviors within each lesson, across the five units, across both groups, and even across the fourteen students, who shifted in their groupings over the length of the study. After coding each “day,” I read my post-enactment memos for these lessons to triangulate my developing findings. Evidence of my codes in the memos strengthened my findings and is cited in the results. Absence of my codes in the memos cued me to revisit my codes to ensure I had sufficient examples to warrant each finding, because I hadn’t noted anything that fit the pattern as a teacher during these enactments. Finally, I reread the memos with the intent of bringing my attention to anything I had noticed as a teacher that was not captured in the coding scheme and considering whether this note was idiosyncratic or there was cross-unit evidence of this idea.

In Chapter 5, I examine the use of FGA’s pedagogical practices by focusing on the pair/threesome participation structure across all five units. I reviewed the transcripts for every pairs/threesome in every unit. After noting my overall dissatisfaction with the quality of student talk in this participation structure, I reviewed these segments again and open coded for patterns

in how students actually used this time. Despite my disappointment in students' independent participatory behaviors in this participation structure, they produced good work by the end of these sessions, which led me to consider the moves I had made when present with the groups to scaffold the work in spite of their off-task behavior. Therefore, I reviewed these segments again and open-coded for patterns in my teaching moves that productively moved the discussion and analyses forward. Thus, in this chapter, I report on students' unproductive pair/threesome participatory behaviors and my moves to scaffold more productive behavior.

In Chapter 6, I examine our use of metalanguage and FGA terminology by focusing on the FGA activities within each individual unit. Because the metalanguage was guided by text-specific language features, this was the clearest and most informative way to explore it. Guided by the research questions, I decided it was important for readers to understand the intent for highlighting certain language features for certain texts (research question 1), to see evidence of students productively engaging with these features through metalanguage (research question 2), and to hear about the challenges we faced in using metalanguage or the FGA terminology to structure our analyses of texts (research question 2). Therefore, I coded for each of these categories—intent, engagement, and challenges—as I reviewed the FGA activities for each unit. Thus, in this chapter, I report on the explanation and exploration of different language features through metalanguage (and associated FGA terminology) in the context of specific texts, on where this work appeared successful in our work together, and on how it was challenging for me as a novice instructor of FGA. Additionally, despite the unit-specific focus I noted a recurrence of some of the challenges, so I close the chapter with a description of cross-unit challenges that are important to consider when working with any language features.

In Chapter 7, I examine the culminating unit activity: the text-based discussion. My initial codes came from empirical work on Collaborative Reasoning discussions, which have been validated qualitatively and quantitatively as beneficial for student learning. Therefore, since I was emulating this approach in many ways, I coded for similar desirable results: (co-) construction of arguments, text references, and text connections. Additionally, informed by work with the *Language & Meaning* research group, I was looking for three elements in an argument: the stating of a position, evidence to support that position, and elaboration that helped to explicitly connect the evidence to the position. Any of these elements cued me to code for at least an attempt at argument co-construction, even if the example didn't reach a fully developed argument. As I coded, I realized that the TBDs were comprised of two distinct stages because these desirable behaviors were only evident in the latter half of the transcripts. Therefore, I went back and identified the moment when the discussion turned in that direction for each TBD, dividing each TBD into two stages that I coded separately to identify their distinguishing features across all units. Thus, in this chapter, I report on the nature of the FGA-supported TBD as a two-staged discussion and offer evidence that during these TBDs students exhibited behaviors indicative of learning benefits.

In Chapter 7, I also examined the participation of struggling comprehenders during the TBDs. To develop these cases, I looked closely at the participation of the six struggling comprehenders in the study. I then went back to the original transcripts and coded for each struggling reader's contributions to the TBDs, so each TBD was coded six times, once for each struggling reader. I went through the student-specific transcripts again and open-coded to look for patterns in the students' participatory behaviors, which informed the presented results. For struggling readers who rarely spoke, I went back to their pair/threesome work to get more insight

into their participatory behaviors, and these transcripts informed the presentation of results for these students. Finally, I chose four of these mini-cases to present as juxtaposed pairs for illustrating different learner characteristics within the TBD context; these juxtaposed pairs illustrate the considerations that researchers and practitioners need to make when working with students during text-based discussions. This analysis of the struggling comprehenders added nuance and depth to the chapter on TBDs that I feel is missing from the empirical work on TBDs working with ELLs, and rare in the work on TBDs in general.

Finally, after coding transcripts for Day 2, 3, and 4 lessons, I read through transcripts for Day 1 and 5 lessons to see whether these days added anything to my growing understanding of the work. The Day 1 transcripts primarily involved my reading the text aloud, and though students participated when we stopped to check understanding or to define vocabulary, these days were mostly teacher talk and not richly discursive, so I did not open-code them individually because they were not the focus of the study. Students wrote on Day 5 and all that occurred in the transcripts from these days were a restatement of the prompt, procedural talk about where to sit, where to turn in materials, and so on, and management talk to return students to the task or silence off-task talk. Thus, I didn't open code these days either.

## **Summary**

In summary, the data analyses for this teaching experiment consisted of repeated reading of the lessons, transcripts, and memos; open-coding for patterns within these data; identification and verification of connections between patterns through still-repeated reading and coding; and metacognition about my own thinking as the designer, practitioner, and researcher in every stage of this work. I believe this dissertation is an authentic and trustworthy representation of a developing understanding of FGA-supported TBDs.

## CHAPTER 4: PLANNING THE UNITS

The goal of this teaching experiment was to use Functional Grammar Analysis and its associated pedagogical practices to prepare students for successful text-based discussions. The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” To answer these, I first describe the design of the units. This design is my attempt to weave together the accepted pedagogy for TBDs and for FGA. Next, I focus on the planning process that went into developing the units. Reviewing the unit plans and reflecting on their development, I found two important results, both of which focus intently on the role FGA played in the process. First, I describe how the planning and design process was highly iterative due to the relationships among the text, the “big idea,” and the FGA terminology; the sequencing of the different units; and the information I derived from the enactments. Second, I explain how FGA was not just an element to incorporate into a stand-alone unit, but actually served as a planning tool during this stage of the work.

### **An Overview of the Unit Design**

The unit development process took several months of both abstract thought on design and concrete writing of plans. Two TBD approaches were noteworthy influences on the design: *Instructional Conversations* (Goldenberg, 1993; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Saunders,

Patthey-Chavez, & Goldenberg, 1997) and *Collaborative Reasoning* (Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Waggoner, Chinn, & Anderson, 1995). The former defined the group interaction that I desired for the TBDs: open, respectful, thematically-focused, and driven by student talk. The latter defined the participatory behaviors I wanted to encourage in the TBDs: taking positions, referencing the text, and using persuasive discourse. Thus, the reading I had done in these areas influenced my design choices, such as rooting the discussion in a “big idea” that served as a thematic anchor (which is characteristic of ICs) and using a persuasive writing prompt at the end of each unit that served as a topic of debate (which is characteristic of CR discussions). With these broad design goals in mind, I began the work of writing the units.

The more-detailed outline of the lessons described below is based on the initial unit plans and is also summarized in *Table 4.1*. Certain ecological factors caused slight changes in certain units (i.e., a “Day 1” read aloud stretching into two lessons), but this outline and summary table provide a sense of the scope and sequence of each unit, and a context for the post-enactment memos that describe what was successful or challenging in each enactment.

The purpose of Day 1 was to **interactively read the text**. I began each unit with a brief description of the story and its “big idea.” I introduced or elicited ideas about the major themes or concepts in the text. I stopped at predetermined points and student-initiated moments to offer explanation of difficult concepts, to clarify vocabulary, and to check student understanding. We read the text through once, with varying amounts of mid-reading discussion depending on student enthusiasm and the difficulty of the text.

After the initial reading, students worked in pairs/threesomes for two days of text analysis. I guided these subgroups in mindfully revisiting different key segments, rereading and



analyzing them through the lens of the text’s “big idea.”<sup>26</sup> I chose the specific segments of the text because of their potential to support student construction of that idea.

The purpose of Day 2 was to **revisit important text segments** to articulate the meaning of each segment in connection to the “big idea.” The analyses were recorded on large public charts in different ways for each unit. To scaffold student success with this activity, similar analyses were modeled and practiced in the whole group before students were asked to try them independently and during small group work, I circulated to guide and support students by reinforcing, clarifying, and extending the ideas the students were discussing.

The purpose of Day 3 was to **introduce the FGA terminology and examine language in the text exemplifying such features** , connecting these language features to the meaning of the text that the students articulated the day before. This involved a gradual release of responsibility model that was even more explicit than that used on Day 2 to model and practice the work. Initially, I explained the terminology and modeled metalanguage, offering examples in many hypothetical sentences, both written and verbal. I then modeled analysis of one or two segments of the unit’s text using this same terminology and metalanguage. Then I supported students as they attempted similar analysis of two additional text segments with me. This practice prepared the students to engage in independent analysis of the important segments that they considered the previous day in pairs and threesomes. Once again, during small group work, I circulated to guide and support students in their analyses by reinforcing, clarifying, and extending the ideas the students were discussing.

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<sup>26</sup> An example of this is helpful: In *La Bamba*, Manuel’s mixed feelings about his talent show performance experience make it unclear whether or not he will want to perform again next year. So in different text segments, students identified how Manuel was feeling in that specific segment of the text and how the linguistic features of the segment helped us to know his feelings.

In collaboration with other doctoral students and researchers working on the *Language & Meaning* project, I chose the language features for these activities for their potential to highlight the texts' "big ideas" in these segments. The small-group analyses made use of such FGA terminology as *connectors*, specifically the use of "but" to juxtapose ideas; identifying important *participants* in text; the variety of *processes* writers use to describe characters or to convey what characters do, say, think, and feel; and the use of *force* and *polarity*, or "turned up/down" language.

The purpose of Day 4 was to **organize the important information**. I used a visual organizer (a timeline divided in ways that were meaningful to the specific text) to holistically present the information from each group in a way that cohesively connected the text segments to the text's "big idea" and thus served as an anchor for the discussion and a resource for the writing. The presentation of this information was highly discursive—the actual TBD, in fact—as the importance of text segments and the small group's analyses were open for other students to reinforce or take issue with. How the text's meaning and language features fit into the "big idea" of the whole narrative rooted the discussion. This day concluded by asking students to look at this presentation of the information with the persuasive prompt in mind. Students considered the "big idea," presented holistically in the visual organizer, to begin deciding on their positions. During this part of the discussion, the charts offered specific text segments and language to support and clarify their responses.

The purpose of Day 5 was to **engage in writing to the prompt**. I re-stated the writing prompt and posted a chart with the opening sentence for either position. Students had the rest of the session to write a response. They had access to the text and the visually-organized information from previous days. The student task was to write essays that took a position with

respect to the prompt and to support it with evidence from the text. I often explained that the objective was to convince someone who had another position to change his/her mind.

The units ended with a written response to help focus the discursive work on an upcoming goal. A consistent type of prompt is ideal because it limits the influence of the genre of the writing task on the characteristics of the discussion and the writing performance of the students from unit to unit. Persuasive prompts are ideal because they are a common academic task, have a more consistent format than some other written genres, and have been shown by Anderson and colleagues to facilitate critical-analytical discussions (Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Waggoner, Chinn, Yi, & Anderson, 1995), which are associated with proximal measures of higher-level thinking (Soter, Wilkinson, Murphy, Rudge, Reninger, & Edwards., 2008).

Table 4.1 General text unit plan

	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Interactively read the text</i>	<i>Revisit important text segments</i>	<i>Introduce the FGA terminology and examine language in the text exemplifying such features</i>	<i>Organize the important information</i>	<i>Engage in writing to the prompt</i>
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Teacher provides/elicits important background knowledge;</p> <p>Teacher and students read the text;</p> <p>Teacher stops at predetermined and student-initiated points to clarify/highlight confusing or important vocabulary and ideas</p>	<p>Subgroups work with important segments of the text to analyze them with respect to the “big idea”</p>	<p>Teacher introduces the FGA metalanguage and models application to the text;</p> <p>Students practice application of the FGA metalanguage to the text, supported by the teacher</p> <p>Students analyze their text segments from the previous day, using the FGA metalanguage independently</p>	<p>Teacher uses a visual organizer to post group work, and reviews the important text segments and affiliated Day 2 and Day 3 analyses;</p> <p>Whole group discusses the work of subgroups and the connections between segments of the text, with respect to the “big idea”;</p> <p>Whole group considers this holistic presentation of information in light of the writing prompt</p>	<p>Teacher presents the writing prompt again and reminds students to use the text to support their answers;</p> <p>Students write responses to the prompt</p>

## **The Highly-Iterative Planning and Design Process**

I expected some iterative aspects in the unit development process. I planned all along to get feedback from my committee members and incorporate their suggestions to refine my drafted plans. I also recognized the assets of using a text the research group had worked with extensively—*La Bamba*—in order to benefit from the numerous revisions we had done to it. Beyond these expected incorporations of revision into the process, however, I found the planning of these units to be notably iterative in nature, across all texts, largely (and beneficially) due to the particulars of working with FGA. Additionally, consistent with teaching experiments, I made revisions to the units as the study progressed when enactments suggested revisions. In this section I describe the iterative process of designing the units before the enactments and my revision of the units during enactments.

### **The “FGA Fit”: Language Features, the Text, and the Unit Objectives in Relationship**

The unit design process began with my text choices, which I describe in more detail in Chapter 3. For each text, I began by working with several different types of FGA terminology to find the right fit. I identified different language features in the text, designed the record sheets the students would work with to examine them, and scripted the metalanguage I would use to elaborate the features’ connections to the “big ideas.” As these parallel planning processes occurred, I honed in on the most effective language feature with which to work. “The most effective one” was dependent both on how well it worked in the unit plan, and on how well the five unit plans worked together. This resulted in multiple iterations of the same unit, many of which were eventually discarded.

**“How well it worked.”** I want to emphasize that I chose language features that would enhance the work with a text, not the other way around, as explicated by my third text-choice

criterion, “the salient presence of a language feature that would be accessible to novices in FGA.” This criterion encompasses three conditions that I realized were necessary for a particular language feature to be a good match for the text unit. These conditions nested such that each one successively narrowed the choices. First, the language feature had to be *prevalent*. A feature that was not frequently present in the text would not be helpful for supporting the text-based discussion.<sup>27</sup> I was aware of this condition early because not all features are consistently present in text. For example, I knew that *processes* were often helpful for studying characters in narrative texts, but the four types of *processes* were present in different concentrations across texts. In *The New Doctor*, Dr. Johnson’s *processes* are almost exclusively *saying* or *doing*, so I did not need to focus on all four *process* types. I could save introducing *sensing* and *being processes* for other texts. Therefore, for each text I had to make sure to choose the language feature that was frequently present in the text, rather than a feature that may have been interesting, but present only in a single text segment.

Second, the language feature had to be *salient*. FGA is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, which describes language comprehensively. Therefore, there are always some (often many) examples of FGA constructs at work in any written or oral text. This condition checked whether particular language features drew attention to important segments of the text. For example, an examination of the FGA construct *theme*, which is the opening clause or “point of departure” for a sentence, can be very useful with informational texts for focusing student attention on what the author is focusing on topically, but this is less often helpful in the dynamic and varied sentence structures of narrative texts. Looking at what a character says and does,

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<sup>27</sup> That is not to say that a linguistic feature that is rare in the text does not merit attention in other instructional contexts, but we were using the language features to return to multiple important segments of the text; an obscure example would not have been useful.

however—their *doing* and *saying processes*—is beneficial in many narrative texts.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, for each text and its possibilities, I had to make sure to choose the language feature that would underscore or enhance the meaning of important segments of the text, rather than simply being present in the text in multiple, random segments.

Finally, the language feature had to be *accessible* to novices. The students had minimal or no exposure to FGA before this teaching experiment, and I myself was a novice teacher of FGA. We had to work with features that I felt I understood adequately and that students could work with successfully. For example, I eventually abandoned a unit for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* due to it not meeting this condition. Working with the *participants* and their *processes* was proving to be very challenging because much of the text was written in the form of letters between the different characters. Students who were more familiar with these FGA constructs could probably have handled the shifting perspective changes and attributed *processes* to the correct *participants*, but I finally decided it was asking too much of my novice students and would “muddy the waters” when it came to familiarizing them with this terminology and metalanguage. Therefore, for each language feature that I considered, I had to make sure to choose one that students and I could work with in ways that facilitated understanding the text, rather than adding confusing elements.

**Working together: five unit plans.** There is not a prescribed “scope and sequence” for the general teaching FGA to students. Within some developed curricula, a sequence exists that surely grappled with the ideas I am about to describe, but the order in which to introduce terminology depends less on the list of options than on the texts one is working with and the learning objectives for the work.

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<sup>28</sup> These examples are to illustrate the idea of saliency, not to propose “rules” about text types and FGA metalanguage. An analysis of *theme* could be beneficial for some narrative texts and an analysis of *processes* is often helpful in informational texts.

Therefore, as I developed each unit and explored the FGA possibilities, I also had an awareness of how the developing units might fit together. Having recently deepened my knowledge of FGA during the two years with the *Language & Meaning* research group and a course on systemic functional linguistics, I was attentive to the terminology and types of metalanguage that had been easiest for me to learn, and how the different constructs worked together to help me understand each of them with more depth. I did not develop a “scope and sequence” for my study units, but I did consider how to put the units in order based on the focal language feature for each text. In tandem, I made adjustments to the unit plans to help them flow into each other well. This process, however, was messy and required many changes as the work progressed.

For example, for *McBroom and the Big Wind* I explored the *participants* to help students view the wind as a character in the story, not just an act of nature. Per the conditions outlined above, I chose this language feature because it was prevalent (the wind is a *participant* in nearly every sentence in the story), it was salient, (the “big idea” was that the McBrooms’ experience the wind as both a positive and negative presence in their lives) and it was accessible. The last condition can be explained by considering other FG constructs that we worked with later: *processes*. In an effort to juxtapose the helpful and harmful effects of the wind on the McBroom family, I had also worked on a unit plan in which students were going to identify the wind’s different *processes* and designate them as positive or negative influences on the McBrooms. This approach could have worked equally well for the unit, but when I considered how thinking about something abstract as a *participant* was challenging, and that working with *processes* requires some acknowledgement of the *participant* engaging in the process, I decided it would be better to make use of *McBroom and the Big Wind* to powerfully illustrate the variety of



*participants* in sentences and stories, and to build on that knowledge in a later unit by explaining the relationship between *participants* and *processes*. This would allow students to later analyze *processes* for a variety of *participants*, whether they might be humans, objects or something more abstract. Regardless of whether this was the perfect decision, it illustrates the iterative quality of this planning and design process.

### **Ongoing Revisions**

During the study, I continued to revise the units. Each unit offered its own idiosyncratic feedback through the enactments, but some of this feedback was broader and applicable to the entire design, and so I made changes based on what I had learned from enactments of previous units.

**Unit-specific revisions.** Some revisions applied only to the specific unit. The most illustrative example of this is revising *La Bamba* after the pilot. Even though the work for this unit was informed by much previous work in other classrooms with the *Language & Meaning* research group, I still made a major change after piloting the unit. The pilot went well and students handled the first FGA construct perfectly. It introduced the language features *force* and *polarity* to show how authors use language to “turn up” or “turn down” ideas in a text.<sup>29</sup> The “big idea” in *La Bamba* is that Manuel experiences both pleasant and unpleasant feelings during his talent show experience. Having students look at language that plays with the *force* and *polarity* of his feelings was very useful, and the unit was successful. During the text-based discussion, however, I found myself unexpectedly highlighting a different FGA construct: the *connector* “but.” It is both prevalent and salient in the story because the author often juxtaposes Manuel’s feelings to show internal conflict about the experience or an unexpected turn of events. When I

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<sup>29</sup> An example of *turning it up* would be writing that “Maria glared at her mother and shouted, ‘No!’” as opposed to “Maria looked at her mother and told her no,” if the idea being expressed is that Maria is angry.

worked with this language feature, I felt it was an even better fit for the unit; moreover, it seemed more accessible as a first taste of FGA because it was a single word serving the same meaningful function in many different segments. I revised the unit before the formal teaching experiment began.

An example of making smaller revisions comes from the work with *The New Doctor*. In this unit I changed the wording of the prompt when several students expressed confusion over what exactly I was asking. The original wording of the two positions one could take on the prompt was “Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine” or “Dr. Johnson will not grow to accept traditional medicine.” It became clear that the phrase “grow to accept” was not meaningful for these students, exemplifying the kind of abstract concept that can be difficult for ELLs. I explained what I meant, but knew full well that a prompt that confused them on the first day would likely mire us in confusion as the work continued. Therefore, the next day I changed the possible positions to “Dr. Johnson will become open-minded about traditional medicine,” or “Dr. Johnson will stay closed-minded about traditional medicine.” These re-wordings grew from the pre-reading discussion focused on cross-cultural experiences and the feelings of being open- or closed-minded, which students had engaged in readily.

**Cross-unit revisions.** The above unit-specific revisions offer even wider feedback for unit design, such as the importance of careful wording and the use of multiple entries into a text. Therefore, I deliberately incorporated some of the ongoing revisions from one unit into the subsequent units.

One example was logistical. Every unit assigned several text segments to the pairs and threesomes. They needed to complete their analysis of each segment so that we could look at all the work together as part of the text-based discussion. During the second unit (*McBroom and the*

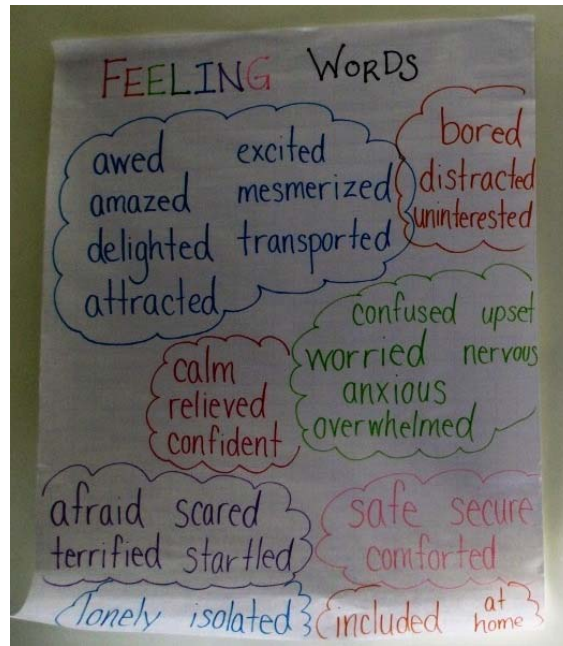
*Big Wind*) I found groups were struggling to complete all of their segment analyses in the allotted time.<sup>30</sup> I found myself having to make decisions about which segments were most important for them to complete in order to best support the rest of the unit work. As a result, I revisited all of the subsequent unit plans and prioritized the segments for each pair/threesome so that the most important segments would be distributed first, and the remaining ones could be “bonus” segments for groups that finished early. This allowed me to manage the time, get the most important work done, and offer enrichment.

Another example of cross-unit revision concerned soliciting deeper ideas from students. By the fourth unit (*Marven of the Great North Woods*), I had realized that much of our work centered around characters’ feelings and that students were relying on the “good/bad” and “happy/sad” dichotomies for almost all of their written responses. Therefore, I tried making a chart that offered a wider variety of “feeling words” and went over them with the group (see *Figure 4.1*). I instructed the students to refrain from using *good*, *bad*, *happy*, or *sad* from then on, and to choose words from the chart as they worked with their segments. The chart was very successful in supporting students’ use of wider vocabulary, and students expressed appreciation both by looking at it and by explicitly asking me to put it up again for the essay-writing day. Therefore, I kept the chart up for the next unit as well, when we would be discussing characters’ feelings again. This revision speaks to the way well-established ELL challenges—such as limited English vocabularies—can be addressed in this context. The chart served to help them access a wider vocabulary for describing feelings, and in using such vocabulary they added to their vocabulary learning.

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<sup>30</sup> A big part of this had to do with students only working when I was present with their group to assist them, an idea I will discuss in the next chapter.

Figure 4.1 A chart of "feeling words"



It is clear that even after the highly-iterative design process, revision was still occurring as unit enactments began. The memos I wrote after each enactment focus just as much on unit design as on instructional moves. For each unit, there are still aspects I would likely change after the enactments, some big and some small, in replications of this study. These changes are not simply management or pacing issues, but insights into how to potentially improve the design of an FGA-supported TBD.

### **FGA as a Teacher's Planning Tool**

FGA was a useful tool for planning instruction. The previous section made clear that FGA was not something I "added on" to a pre-designed unit. The iterative nature of the planning was in large part a result of determining a learning objective for a specific text and finding the ways FGA could be used to support that work. Conducting my own analyses of the text's language features served as a planning tool that helped me improve the foundations of the units.

In this section I will describe how FGA helped me to articulate “big ideas” in the texts, to identify the most important text segments with which to work, and to structure that work for students.

### **Identifying the “Big Idea”**

I used FGA to identify and refine the “big idea” that emerged from the texts. To begin, I read the texts several times and articulated the “big ideas” to myself. I then checked them against additional readings and compared them to the themes discussed in the basal teaching manuals. However, once I began writing up the units and using different metalanguage to talk about the texts’ language features, the “big ideas” became more nuanced or sometimes changed altogether because the language analyses I was doing highlighted aspects of the text that I hadn’t noticed before.

Sometimes I refined the idea in subtle ways. With *McBroom and the Big Wind*, for example, I initially articulated the “big idea” as, “Something can be helpful or harmful, *depending on the intensity and the situation*. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives.” However, after using FGA in several ways to examine the *processes* of the wind and the McBroom family members as *participants* in the text, I revised this articulation to, “Something can be helpful or harmful, *depending on whether or not we can control it*. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, *depending on who is more powerful*.” The change (in italics) is subtle, but more specific. I realized that “the intensity and the situation” is vague. I was basically saying that sometimes the wind is good and sometimes it is bad, depending on the context. One of my approaches to the FGA, however, was looking at the wind as a *participant* and identifying when the surrounding *processes* were the wind’s *processes* acting on the McBrooms and when they were the

McBrooms' *processes* acting on the wind. Through this analysis it became clear that specific aspects of the "intensity and situation" mattered. If the wind was acting on the McBrooms in unsolicited ways, it was portrayed as negative in their lives. If the McBrooms were acting on the wind—using it in intentional ways—it was portrayed as positive in their lives. This refinement of the "big idea" allowed for discussion of power and control, which enriched our understanding of the relationship between the family and the wind beyond simply saying that sometimes they liked it and sometimes they didn't. Something important to note about this is that I did not have the students conduct the same sort of analysis. We focused on the wind as an abstract *participant* and the way some of the language personified the wind to enhance this idea. They did not look at *processes* in an explicit way yet. However, my examination of the *processes* during the planning process led me to refine my "big idea" for the unit.

Other times the revision of the "big idea" was more obvious. In *The New Doctor*, there is a dominant focus on medicine, specifically the differences between modern and traditional approaches to medicine. When I read the text, I was focused on that as I articulated the "big idea," and the teacher manual reinforced this thinking with many activities focused on explaining the medicine in the story. Thus, my initial "big idea" was, "Modern medicine and traditional medicine have some things in common, but are also skeptical of each other. Lupe isn't sure if the new doctor in her village and the traditional healer in her village will be able to work together." Initially when I used FGA to look closely at the text, I looked at the *polarity* and *force* of the language, which I was hoping would highlight how the different medical practices were portrayed as "good" or "bad." During this analysis, though, I noted times when the *polarized* and *forceful* language was incorporated into quotation marks—a character's words—because I anticipated the need to address this with students. Through that analysis it became clear that

most of the *polarized* and *forceful* language concerned Dr. Johnson and her words and actions. She was the one who was struggling to reconcile the conflicting ideas of traditional and modern medicine. I then realized that the “big idea” of the text was not so much a commentary on the evolution and traditions of medicine as it was on the struggle people go through when they experience a cultural change. Thus, I changed the “big idea” to “It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn’t sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.” This was a very different focus for the unit, and one I feel was far more beneficial for students to think about. Though the medical aspect of this story was informative and interesting, it was more important that what students took away from the text was an understanding of how people respond to differences and challenges to their ways of life. If I hadn’t conducted the FGA analysis in my planning, I likely would have stuck with a focus on the comparing of the two medical approaches, as the basal lessons did.

### **Selecting Text Segments**

FGA also helped me carefully select rich text segments for students to revisit in their pairs/threesomes, which was the foundation of this teaching experiment. Revisiting these segments was intended to better prepare these students for the TBD. Using FGA as a planning tool helped me identify broad areas of the text that were rife with language that was meaningfully connected to the “big idea.” Furthermore, it helped me narrow in to determine where precisely to begin and end the segments. FGA helped me in three ways: by drawing my attention to text segments I would have overlooked, by drawing my attention to subtleties within a segment that I would not have highlighted, and by helping me make principled decisions about how to parse large, dense segments in meaningful ways.

**Inclusion of overlooked segments.** Using FGA often drew my attention to segments I might have otherwise ignored. In planning for *The New Doctor* unit, I was initially focused on the text that spoke explicitly about medicine. As I described in the previous section, FGA allowed my thinking to broaden, and a closer look at Dr. Johnson's *doing* and *saying processes* changed the focus to a look at her handling of new ideas in general. Once that change occurred and I looked closely at all of Dr. Johnson's words and actions, new segments were informative for the discussion. For example, upon meeting the local village girl, Lupe, sneaking around outside the clinic, Dr. Johnson says to her:

I can understand... You have never had a clinic here before, and I suppose you wanted to see what it is like. I would have been the same way at your age. I was curious about just about everything – always poking my nose into something, and often getting into trouble. (p. 271)

Before the linguistic analysis broadened my focus and subsequently guided my selection of text segments, I hadn't paid much attention to this segment. In the unit, however, we had a rich discussion about curiosity, its relationship to open-mindedness, and how this may have indicated Dr. Johnson's true open-minded nature, which was obscured when she was nervously dealing with situations in this new cultural context. Additionally, Dr. Johnson says and does things that display her inner conflict, speaking with hesitation (i.e., "You really shouldn't..." and "Oh... very well."; p. 281) and behaving nervously (i.e., "biting her lower lip" and "[wrinkling her brow]"; p. 281) during pivotal moments. Without FGA that focused intently on this characters' every *process*, many of these small indicators may have been missed.

Like *The New Doctor* and its dominant medicine theme, the lumberjacks are a dominant theme for *Marven of the Great North Woods*. Using FGA to examine the *forceful* and *polarized* language, however, helped me identify other important aspects of Marven's experience in his new living conditions, selecting text that I might not have deemed important without such



analysis. For example, Marven is shown to his office/bedroom, which I could easily have glossed over as a simple temporal transition from his arrival night to his first day of work early the next morning. But the author *turns up* the language to show something Marven likes about this new life already, which is his privacy and independence:

Mr. Murray took Marven to the small office where he would work and sleep. In Duluth, Marven had to share a bedroom with his two younger sisters and all of their dolls and toys, but this room was his—all his—and he liked it. (p. 220).

This isn't just Marven feeling satisfied with his room; this is Marven comparing his new life to his old and the new life gaining a point. This moment, in fact, became important to the discussion as students related to the need to find space from their siblings. However, I might never have noticed its importance without examining the language that *turned up* the moment, such as “all of their dolls and toys” and “all his.”

Sometimes FGA served a practical purpose that ended up enhancing my understanding of the “big idea” of the story and drawing my attention to overlooked text segments. When I first approached *Toto*, I was more fixated on the little boy, Suku, than on the elephant he saves. It was clear that the way Suku changed in the story—becoming braver through the act of saving the trapped baby elephant—was important. However, because this text is somewhat shorter than the others and because it was our last one, meaning the students were more adept at identifying characters' feelings, I feared not having enough substantive text on Suku to work with. As I reread the story, marking up the Suku segments, I began realizing just how much of the text was dedicated to the elephant; there wasn't as much as there was for Suku, but more than a third of the text focused on Toto the elephant (as did the title). Then I considered what the text was trying to say about Toto and I made use of the same FGA constructs, Toto's *processes* and associated thoughts and feelings. I realized that the elephant goes through a major change too,

which broadened the scope of our text analysis and discussion from a consideration of bravery to a consideration of how major personal changes can occur due to dramatic life experiences.

Drawing from the experience of Toto as well and Suku, I included a slew of segments I might otherwise have left out because they focused solely on Toto.

**Highlighting subtleties within a segment.** Within these important text segments, FGA drew attention to language that might have gone unnoticed otherwise. For example, initially I identified places in *La Bamba* where it was clear what Manuel was feeling. However, when I returned to the text to find examples of the author using the *connector* “but,” I discovered subtly meaningful language I had overlooked. For example, when Manuel is first performing in the talent show, we are struck by the vivid language that describes the crowd staring at him like a monkey at a zoo. Right before that language, however, is a “but” preceded by “some people were moving to the beat.” The segment reads: “Some people were moving to the beat but most were just watching him, like they would a monkey at the zoo. But when Manuel did a fancy dance step, there was a burst of applause and some girls screamed” (p. 172). Without the metalanguage that drew my attention to how “but” connects two ideas, I would have juxtaposed his feelings over being stared at like a monkey with his fancy dance step that was well received. I would have missed the fact that Manuel noticed right away that some people were moving to the beat. It is a small moment, but it does help to enhance the idea of Manuel feeling some encouragement to dance in spite of the bored staring, and it shows his frantic emotional state as he searches the crowd for the approval he so craves. Because I used “but” as a divider within segments, we talked about this small detail—people moving to the beat—and it didn’t get lost.

In a more important way, I drew attention to the fact that Manuel was confused by the crowd’s post-performance response to him:

Funny? Manuel thought. Did he do something funny? Funny. Crazy. Hilarious. These were the words people said to him. He was confused, but beyond caring. All he knew was that people were paying attention to him, and his brothers and sisters looked at him with a mixture of jealousy and awe. (p. 174)

Again, without engaging in FGA that focused on the *connector* “but” and drew my attention to the juxtaposition of his state of “confusion” and “beyond caring,” I might not have made much of that word “confused.” Since it was highlighted by the FGA, however, we had an extensive talk about a key idea in the story that many students didn’t understand at first, which was that Manuel’s happiness was initially tempered by not understanding why they thought he was funny. He was getting what he wanted—the limelight—but that was overshadowed momentarily by his confusion over why he was seen as successful. Moreover, we discussed how it showed his definition of a successful act was whether it garnered attention, not whether it went as planned. We talked about this a lot during the discussion, and I wouldn’t have noticed it without the FGA I had done.

*Marven of the Great North Woods* conveys Marven’s feelings in sometimes subtle ways. Reading closely helped us truly assess Marven’s response to his environment, and not simply project our own perspective onto him. The FGA I did while planning, and subsequently used with the students, helped me track Marven’s feelings more closely and select every shred of important text. For example, when Marven first arrives at camp, the author describes what he sees when he observes the lumberjacks dancing: “Immense men with long beards and wild hair were jumping around to the fiddler’s tunes like a pack of frantic grizzly bears. They were the biggest and wildest men Marven had ever seen” (p. 218). *Polarized* and *forceful* language give the reader insight into what a spectacle this was, with words like **immense**, **wildest**, and **biggest** used to describe the jacks, and “jumping around... like a pack of frantic grizzly bears” used to describe the dancing. This is not an example of subtle language that gets overlooked. This vivid

moment would likely have been notable without the explicit FGA I had done. However, the subtlety enters when we consider that it elicits a reader's response to the scene. Depending on the reader's perspective, he might project onto Marven feelings of terror or delight regarding this spectacle. But we don't need to infer this based on our feelings; the author does, in fact, imply how Marven feels. Immediately afterwards, the text continues "Marven could have watched the dancing all night" (p. 218). This indication that Marven didn't want to leave and only did so at the urging of his boss is evidence that he is fascinated by the jacks, which complicates and balances his simultaneous fear of their size. Without an analysis of the *polarized* and *forceful* language that *turned up* this phrase—"all night"—I might have skimmed over that sentence or not included it at all.

In another example of FGA highlighting subtle wording, Marven's life after a week at camp is described: "Every day the routine was simply meals and work, and Marven kept to his office and away from the lumberjacks as much as he could" (p. 227). Without FGA I would surely have focused on his staying away from the jacks as a sign of fear to use this segment as evidence that he won't be happy here. But the FGA drew attention to the word **simply** and I was able to see an additional way that this segment shows Marven is not happy: he is bored. He is not especially stimulated by this monotonous daily routine, which juxtaposes nicely with his subsequent ski trip into the woods that are stunningly beautiful. I would have completely overlooked this small expression of his boredom, however, if not for the FGA I did with the text.

**Deciding where to parse text.** In many texts, where to begin and end a segment was clear from paragraphing or from an intuitive sense of the completion of an idea. For certain segments it was trickier, however, and one text had many of these. The use of FGA with *McBroom and the Big Wind* was imperative for helping me decide how to parse the text

segments. The story is dense with action and the wind and the McBrooms are the constant *participants*, with nearly every sentence describing action by one or the other. It was challenging to face that much informative text and decide where one important moment ended and the next began, particularly because many actions and events were woven together into a larger event, such as “the storm.” However, when I used FGA to consider the power and control shifts between *participants* that I described earlier, it became clear where to divide the segments for most cases. As soon as power shifted to the other *participant*, it was time to separate the segments. For example, here is a slice of action from the text:

[1] I plowed right along and gained rapidly on the young'uns. They were still holding hands and just clearing the tree tops. Before long I was within hailing distance.

"Be brave, my lambs!" I shouted. "Hold tight!"

[2] I spurted after them until their shadows lay across my path. But the bedsheet was so swelled out with wind that I couldn't stop the plow. Before I could let go of the handles and jump off I had sailed far ahead of the young'uns.

I heaved the rope into the air. “WilljillhesterchesterpeterpollytimtommaryLarry-andlittlectarinda," I shouted as they came flying overhead. "Hang on!"

[3] Hester missed the rope, and Jill missed the rope, and so did Peter. But Will caught it. I had to dig my heels in the earth to hold them. And then I started back. The young'uns were too light for the wind. They hung in the air. I had to drag them home on the rope like balloons on a string. (p. 371)

This whole segment could be considered one event or moment. However, when I used FGA to consider the two *participants* in relationship to each other, noting when the McBrooms were using the wind to their advantage and when the wind was too much for them, I parsed this piece into three separate segments, indicated by the bracketed numbers. Initially, McBroom is using the very wind that has blown his children away to ride the wind plow he had created and catch up to his children, showing his control of the wind to his advantage. Quickly though, that plan becomes derailed by the wind being too strong for McBroom to slow down as he approaches his kids, causing him to fly past them. When he tosses them a rope, however, and begins toting them home like a string of balloons, he has regained his power over the wind. Dividing the text

this way made the assessment of who is in control easier for students, and when the text was displayed as a whole again, the shifting power (indicated by a color-coding technique) became clear and powerful for the story’s “big idea.”

### **Further Text Engagement**

I explained above how FGA helped me look at the texts, but it also provided a useful and accessible means for getting students to look the text, yet again, with a different but complementary purpose. Rereading the important segments many times is a way of scaffolding student participation in the later TBD; with more familiarity with important parts of the text, they are better equipped to talk about it.

In *McBroom and the Big Wind* the pairs/threesomes spent one day articulating what the two *participants*—the wind and the McBrooms—were doing in different segment and deciding who was more powerful in those segments. The next day they identified examples of personifying language in the text that enhanced the idea of the wind as a character. The distinct tasks allowed them to engage with the same text segments in complementary but different ways.

In *The New Doctor*, the pairs and threesomes first considered what Dr. Johnson’s *saying* and *doing processes*<sup>31</sup> showed us about what she was thinking. The next day, they returned to the same segments and decided if what the segments showed about her thinking made the new doctor appear open- or closed-minded about traditional medicine. Again, they engaged with the same segments, but deepened their interpretation of what the author was showing them, connecting it to the text’s “big idea.”

In *Marven of the Great North Woods*, the pairs/threesomes identified what Marven was thinking and/or feeling in different segments. The next day, they returned to these segments and

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<sup>31</sup> At this stage in the teaching experiment I didn’t use the metalanguage *process*, for reasons I talk about in Chapter 6.

highlighted *turned up/down* language that supported their assessments of his thoughts and feelings, connecting the author's word choices to the ideas they had understood from the segments. The tasks were different—one involving writing a sentence to articulate his thoughts or feelings, the other involving highlighting the language in the segment that supported this—so the students didn't feel bored. More importantly, the two activities complemented each other and led students to consider Marven's feelings yet again.

In *Toto*, the students first read text segments and categorized them according to Toto's and Suku's changing character traits.<sup>32</sup> The next day, they had to decide if the author showed them the character's current state of mind through *doing* and *saying processes*, or told them through *sensing* and *being processes*. When they looked at their text segments this time, they had to check and reinforce their assessments of the character's traits, then explore the language choices the author made to convey them.

*La Bamba* is somewhat exceptional because students worked with a different set of text segments on their two days of pair/threesome work. On the first day, the pairs and threesomes identified Manuel's feelings in some shorter, simpler segments, and the next day they worked with more complex segments that incorporated the *connector* "but" to link opposing, conflicted feelings or events in Manuel's experience. Although they didn't revisit the same segments, as in the other units, they did enhance their understanding of Manuel's emotional ride. And instead of doing the same exact activity, the focus on the word "but" made the task feel somewhat novel and more challenging.

This is an important aspect of this instructional design because finding ways to revisit the text is not as easy as it might sound, from the practitioner's perspective. Student interest often

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<sup>32</sup> Suku changes from "timid and afraid" to "confident and brave" in the story, and Toto the elephant changes from "having wanderlust" to "being content at home."

wanes quickly, and being told to revisit the text in general, or even to review segments for vague reasons, can be a useless exercise if students feel like they “already read it.” Duke and Block (2012) highlight findings by a federal panel focused on the improvement of reading comprehension that stress the importance of motivating activities:

U.S. students rank near the bottom of students around the world in their attitudes toward reading, suggesting that generating motivation is a formidable and challenging task in U.S. schools. Teachers, the panel said, could create a motivating environment, helping students to understand the benefits of reading and to feel successful in their reading, by offering choice in the topics and texts that they read, and by providing opportunities for students to work together to achieve a goal or complete a task. (p. 64)

The design of these units structured tasks that had clear goals and required a careful rereading of text segments, and scaffolded the tasks to help students feel successful. Moreover, student work was synthesized through the TBDs to create a gestalt, which showed students how their efforts in the pairs/threesomes contributed to a holistic understanding of the text for the larger group.

### **Summary and Discussion of Results**

The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” The results in this chapter shed light on two important aspects of the planning process. Here I summarize these results and discuss what they mean for the research questions.

#### **The Iterative Planning Process**

The planning process for an FGA-supported text-based discussion was highly iterative. I created many drafts in my efforts to find a good fit between the texts, the focal language features, and the “big ideas,” with consideration of the different language features’ prevalence and



salience in the texts, and accessibility to the students. I also thought about how the different units fit together. Additionally, I made online revisions to improve units such as changing focal language features, rewording prompts, prioritizing text segments, and scaffolding vocabulary for English language learners. Even when all of this careful planning was done, however, the work was complex enough to warrant further review and reflection in my post-enactment memos.

Teachers will require patience and support to learn to do this kind of planning. It took time, analysis attempts that ended up being fruitless, and occasional consultation with experts. Professional development and pre-service education are means for supporting teachers, but the decisions I made while planning these lessons made heavy use of long-term relationships that served as definitive sources of expert knowledge about the FGA terminology and metalanguage and affective sources of encouragement through my ongoing iterations. These relationships are often not possible in traditional professional development and teacher education settings. We must explore ways to offer this support, however, because in our increasingly diverse schools, “teachers are responsible for planning both conceptual and linguistic development for [ELLs] in order to meet grade-level standards for all students” (Harper and de Jong, 2004, p. 158). This support will be even more necessary for teachers who have not thought of themselves as language teachers before (Yoon, 2007). Despite my teacher certification and experience teaching ELLs, this was the first time I thought of myself as a teacher of language within a content area, in the sense of being aware of the language challenges in the text and talking about them explicitly with students; I would not have been able to do this alone, however well-intentioned.

One alternative avenue for providing this support could be instructional coaching. In her case-study analysis of a coach for teachers of ELLs, Chien (2013) describes the important role

that coaches play in improving teaching practice, with co-planning lessons being repeatedly cited as one realm of this work. Coaching seems like a means of support with more potential when I consider what was involved in planning the units in this teaching experiment: a developing content knowledge of a novel form of language analysis, application of that system to texts, use of less-than-commonplace classroom participation structures, and continuous evaluation of how the multiple lesson elements were fitting together. I was working hard to do what Harper and de Jong (2004) call for in the instruction of ELLs: “Mainstream teachers must learn to look *at* rather than *through* language used in the classroom in order to understand the linguistic demands” (p. 158). Looking “at” the language was beneficial, as I described, but no small task. All of these facets have implication for the intensity and multiple types of support that teachers embarking on this work will need. Chien asserts that “The most efficient and effective way to improve teachers’ knowledge base, analytical skills, and expertise is through one-on-one coaching” (p. 7). Matsumara, Garnier, & Spybrook (2012) used literacy coaches in their efforts to improve classroom TBDs and found evidence that the “Content-Focused Coaching” (CFC) program they designed positively impacted classroom discussions: “CFC coaches teach teachers to consider both the level of coherence and ‘grist’ in the texts provided by their district based on research indicating that both features of text (coherence and engaging content) play a role in students’ comprehension” (p. 37). That said, a rich and complex body of literature exists on coaching that outlines personal characteristics successful coaches need, relationship aspects that must be present between the coach and the coached, and infrastructures required in school settings to ensure that the coaches actually have contexts for coaching. However, Chien cites Taylor’s 2008 chapter on instructional coaching, which concludes that, when conditions are ideal, “people being coached will try new strategies.”

Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) found that to be true when they considered these same issues in their work on discursive reading instruction. In fact, they dedicated an article to the topic of supporting teachers to try the approach. Their work with ICs resulted in a need to grapple with the complexity of helping practitioners to learn to plan for (and enact) such lessons. They articulated several principles to guide the professional development design to best help teachers be successful. These principles also point to the need for sustained relationships with experts within an ongoing learning context. They state that “teachers must have opportunities to meet with colleagues and a skilled consultant for an extended period for the explicit purpose of learning new knowledge and skills” (p. 70).

Because of the complexity of this iterative planning process, if we want teachers to enact this approach, we need to include planning in the efforts to teach the approach. This is challenging both ecologically and intellectually. In a school culture that is growing progressively more dependent on scripted reading programs, asking teachers to do this kind of work goes against the current (see Calderón, et al., 2005 for a description of teachers’ feelings of inadequacy regarding planning the complex instruction involved in their intervention study) . Furthermore, I did not find an easily-articulated step-by-step method for planning these lessons. Each unit developed somewhat organically out of an exploration of the text’s language. That said, my process grew more intuitive and efficient as I practiced FGA, and I was able to approach later units with more strategic initial steps and with a growing comfort with the process. At times the experience reminded me of my past lesson-planning experiences from my pre-service education, but it had a more sustained and detailed focus than any lesson planning work I had done in those days. This connection to my training echoes the ideas described by researchers applying the Grossman framework (Grossman, et al., 2009) for teaching complex

instructional practices (Kucan, et al., 2011). Applying the framework to the ill-defined instructional domain of a text-based discussion, Kucan and colleagues described work done with teacher educators who were supporting pre-service teachers learning the TBD practices. The article focuses on the three facets of the Grossman framework: *representations*, *decompositions*, and *approximations* of practice. When Kucan and colleagues applied this framework to their teacher education research, lesson planning was part of all three. First, lesson plans served as *representations* of TBD practice that were presented to teacher candidates as models. Second, text analyses that were part of the planning process served as *decompositions* of the TBD practice that parsed the planning activity for the teacher candidates. Finally, the candidates collaboratively planned TBD lessons as *approximations* of practice. In this work, planning was presented as an integral part of the instructional process and candidates were supported in a mindful and organized way as they learned to do it.

As inspiring as this example is, however, it is not the norm for teacher practice yet. Planning is rarely described in articles describing TBD approaches, and practitioners still focus more on enactment as the work of teaching. In a study of how associate teachers felt about the experience of partnering with a student teacher, Danyluk (2012) found a dismissive attitude about planning: “Fourteen [out of 25] respondents indicated less emphasis should be placed on lengthy lesson plans. Associates pointed out that such lesson plans were not used by teachers as they were time consuming and unrealistic” (p. 506). Such attitudes further complicate the already complex process involved in planning for an FGA-supported TBD.

Adding further complexity, the iterative nature of this planning also requires teachers doing this work to feel comfortable letting go of and learning from ideas that are not working. The drafts I did not use were not failed attempts at planning, but rather part of the planning

process. I learned as much about how to work with these texts from aspects that stymied me as I did from aspects that worked well. Multiple iterations might seem cumbersome, but we need to change our attitude about planning that goes awry. If we value easily-accessed and uniformly executed plans, teachers will view the process as a closed task requiring efficiency and easy replication, characterizing iterations as failures. Some of the associate teachers cited in Danyduk's (2012) work above explained that their frustration with the students teachers' focus on planning was because "detailed lesson plans prevented student teachers from being able to deviate from their lesson plans; and as a result, they missed teachable moments (p. 506). I suspect that part of this fear of deviation stems from a feeling that altering lesson plans—online or as we plan—signifies a failure on the part of the teacher. Planning is framed as something that we should be able to sit down and do in one fell swoop, without frustration or mistakes, and this is problematic. If, instead, we value mindful reflection and analyses of "flawed" plans, teachers can view the planning process as an opportunity for creativity and differentiation, characterizing iterations as fuel for good planning. This is especially important in a realm where "perfect" models don't exist, both because perfection with something as dynamic as a discussion is difficult to define, but also because of its neglect in the research. Kucan and colleagues (2011) acknowledge this challenge when they reference "the dearth of existing representations of text based discussions in elementary classrooms that are sufficiently powerful for teaching candidates how to teach reading comprehension" (p. 2913). They acknowledge the fact that imperfect models are still educationally rich: "We are not suggesting that these representations need to be exemplary but rather that would provide the grist for analysis" (p. 2913).

Changing our ideas about the planning process, teaching students how to plan, and providing ongoing support in the process all require an upheaval of most current school and

many current teacher education cultures (see Achugar, Schleppegrell, & Oteiza, 2007; Chien, 2013; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; and Matsumura, Garnier, & Spybrook, 2012 for examples of the work involved in supporting teachers and coaches to plan for complex instruction). This uphill battle is unfortunate because there is potential for this kind of unit-planning to improve teaching skills. The intensive design process incorporates the real work of teaching—articulating learning goals, learning the content deeply, and planning cohesive and rich activities—in a way that reading the directives from a teaching manual does not. I saw how the choices I made played out and how some of my online revisions changed the course of the enactments. In an examination of how enactments can alter teachers’ plans for discussions, Boyd (2012) points out:

Such risk taking is needed on two fronts: first, to signify student thinking and contributions as important, and second, to develop the pedagogical expertise and flexibility needed to wield questions in service of exploring and harnessing student intentions. Yet such teaching and learning experiences are not encouraged in the current educational climate of scripted education, test rehearsals, and efficient accountable practices. (p. 27)

This implies that incorporating training for FGA-supported TBDs into professional development or teacher education content could improve teachers’ skills beyond these specific units.

Such teacher education endeavors might meet with some resistance because they would be equally complex to design (as even a cursory look at the literature on coaching makes clear) but it could be argued that we can offer increasing guidance as we observe more and more practitioner attempts. Goldenberg found this when initial implementation of ICs led to the development of the ten elements of an instructional conversation (Goldenberg, 1992-3) and when watching teachers attempting ICs led to the development of principles for professional development (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991). Kucan and colleagues (2011) found this also, as they worked to integrate TBD training into methods courses. I found this when my own planning

process proved vital to articulating certain ideas, such as the three conditions that must be met for a good text-language feature fit. Working with teachers as they learn to do the work could lead to the creation of additional guidelines that could scaffold this challenging work for them.

To overcome these challenges, one could ask whether a complementary FGA curriculum could be created to accompany a basal unit. Developing a year-long curriculum of units would take time and effort from committed curriculum designers and require a certain amount of expert support during the planning. Moore and Schleppegrell (in press) offer an example of linking specific language features to certain elementary English language arts (ELA) objectives, but the transfer potential of this study is yet to be tested, and it addresses a small slice of the many curricular realms in which FGA can be used. But beyond that logistical hurdle, I am not sure teachers could enact units they didn't plan themselves. Designing the units myself, with the aforementioned support, helped me to be clear about why I was doing what I was doing. In spite of the iterative nature feeling cumbersome at times, using FGA helped me plan better units of instruction because I, as the teacher, better identified the "big idea" of focus for each text, selected ideal text segments for students to work with, and had a means of taking students back into those segments in enriching, interesting ways. The choices came out of *my* intentions for *these* students *with this text*. I suspect that enacting a "canned" FGA unit for these texts would have been more difficult. Gebhard (2010), in fact, explicitly cautions against a prepackaged curriculum for ELL instruction that doesn't give teachers deep knowledge of the SFL theory of language and the use and flexibility of its constructs. One of Goldenberg and Gallimore's (1991) principles for professional development supports this idea: "Teachers who wish to do instructional conversations must thoroughly study the intellectual substance of what is being taught through the conversations" (p. 71). One way of studying the substance of the text, for me,

was through the FGA work I did. Therefore, I propose, shifting more of the teacher workload to the planning stage might be beneficial, if more ecologically cumbersome.

In summary, the planning of individual units and the group of units considered many factors. The iterative process could become messy and overwhelming at times, but it also fostered an openness to revision which led to mindful, careful design decisions that created clarity, direction, and cohesion. This iterative process was beneficial because it left me multiple options for a text, but time-consuming because I would be planning many lessons that would fall away in the end. I believe, however, that the development of these multiple iterations was imperative to designing successful units.

### **FGA as Both the Task and the Tool**

Incorporating FGA into text-based discussion units was the task for this teaching experiment, but FGA was also the tool for planning how to do this. The FGA work I did with each unit helped me identify and refine the “big ideas”; identify important, nuanced and complete text segments; and plan activities to repeatedly engage students with the text in specific and interesting ways.

Text analysis is something many teachers might need assistance with. Particularly in the elementary grades, teachers might not be experts in the different ways to approach the analysis of a text, and providing them with a concrete tool—such as the FGA terminology and metalanguage—would offer them a way into this important planning activity. Kucan and colleagues (2011) describe how their work with decomposing a record of practice by walking candidates through the annotated focal text helped to demystify some of this work. The FGA metalanguage goes a step further in providing structure to this process, though, by offering a concrete “menu” of items that teachers can try with the text, rather than relying on their own



skills at noticing important aspects of the text. Moore and Schleppegrell (in press) illustrate how the FGA metalanguage can help to make the practices of literary analysis more explicit for teachers and students. Moreover, with respect to text analysis, the potential for using FGA in planning goes beyond the realm of text-based discussions. Whether or not teachers ask students to engage in FGA activities, applying the metalanguage to the text during my planning gave me deeper and more nuanced understandings of the text. I refined my initial thoughts about its messages. I examined segments I hadn't looked at closely. In the end, I knew the texts inside out, which better equipped me to teach. Achugar, Schleppegrell, and Oteiza (2007) found similar results in their work with teachers of history and languages other than English with heritage speakers. They, too, found that engaging teachers in FGA assisted them with planning, explaining that "as teachers become more aware of the linguistic resources used to construct knowledge in schools, they are also better able to evaluate the texts students read and write" (p. 21). Therefore, whether the goal is a text-based discussion or something more teacher-centered, such as a lecture about a text, FGA is a useful tool for planning.

In this respect, getting FGA into our schools could start with teachers instead of students. Teachers are sometimes resistant to presentations of new instructional approaches because of the many "fads" that run through schools. Often they feel frustrated that once they have mastered a new approach, something else comes along to replace it. Eventually this can lead to them just waiting it out when a new idea is presented, particularly when it requires a lot of extra work on their parts. Goldenberg & Gallimore (1991) recognize the problem with the plethora of supposed solutions to instructional dilemmas that cycle through schools. They assert that "we must [instead of using quick-fix workshops] create contexts in teachers' work lives that assist and sustain meaningful changes. These contexts should consist, preeminently, of engaging

teachers in rigorous examinations of teaching” (p. 69). Teaching educators how to use FGA as a planning tool may be an easier entrée into real-world school applications. It could be framed as a helpful tool, not added curriculum, which is more palatable to teachers. Plus, as teachers familiarize themselves with it for their own use, they are laying a foundation of knowledge to build upon when learning to use it with students. Whether teachers learn to use FGA before enacting such work with students or in tandem with such attempts, learning to use FGA must be done. Goldenberg and Gallimore point out that “the context for teacher’s skill development must be intellectually stimulating, and teachers must acquire a conceptual understanding of pedagogical processes as well as learn new techniques” (p. 71). The way I best acquired “a conceptual understanding of pedagogical processes” was not from the FGA coursework or research assistant work, but rather through planning these units of instruction.

Once teachers feel knowledgeable about the metalanguage, there is a large payoff in the enactment. One of the things that makes the FGA pedagogical model so great is the way it creates an engaging activity set that facilitates repetitive exposure to the text’s language. In an alternative model, this return to specific text segments, again and again, might feel overly-redundant to students and sacrifice their enthusiasm. More traditional basal approaches that engage the students with the text theme through art projects or complementary texts may be useful, but do not keep them examining the specific text in an analytical way. The way the FGA model organizes a process of analysis, organizing, and sharing makes the planning process easier. I didn’t need to think of “bells and whistles” to keep the students engaged with the text and their segments for yet another day. Instead, I assigned ownership of the specific segments and had two distinct ways for them to engage with them on subsequent days. If I had been

expected to have them revisit these segments, but hadn't had FGA to steer that activity, I am at a loss about how I would have planned it in a novel, engaging way.

In summary, the FGA work I did with the texts during planning helped me better articulate the "big idea" we would explore and make the best selection of text segments that the students would work with. Moreover, within these segments I found more to talk about with the students, and modeled the need for readers to attend to the linguistic choices, both dramatic and subtle, that authors make. Regardless of how much of the metalanguage students retained in order to apply to other texts, the FGA work allowed me to plan activities that engaged them repeatedly with important segments of the text. This repeated work with the text continuously asked them to develop and refine their understandings and check them against those of their partner(s). This fostered a co-construction of meaning that likely undergirded their thinking and participation in the subsequent text-based discussions and assisted me in supporting them.

## CHAPTER 5: WORKING WITH FGA PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES

The goal of this teaching experiment was to use Functional Grammar Analysis and its associated pedagogical practices to prepare students for successful text-based discussions. The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” I addressed these questions with respect to the planning process and will now turn to the enactment of these units. In this chapter, I focus on one of the participation structures—small group work—that is characteristic of the FGA pedagogy.

To remind the reader, I used several participation structures during the units, beginning with whole group shared reading of the texts on Day 1,<sup>33</sup> followed by pair/threesome analysis work on Days 2 and 3, and a return to the whole group discussion of the pair/threesome work and the persuasive prompt in a text-based discussion on Day 4. The students wrote independently on Day 5. I designed the units this way to honor the pedagogical practices for FGA work that I had learned during the *Language & Meaning* research work with Drs. Mary Schleppegrell and Annemarie Palincsar, who emphasized the importance of students working in small groups together on specific segments of the text, then coming back together to discuss their separate analyses as a larger group.

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<sup>33</sup> “Day 1” sometimes spanned two days, but I kept this label for clarity about the unit stages.

In this chapter, I first describe the productivity problems I discovered in the pair/threesome work when I was not present with these small groups. Then I describe the teacher moves I made when circulating to these pairs/threesomes that appeared to scaffold the work for the students, resulting in more productive discussion and thinking about the text.

### **Pair/Threesome Work: Productivity Problems**

The intent of the pair/threesome work was for students to carefully reread important segments of the text, discuss the meaning and language of the segment with respect to a question framed by the teacher on the record sheet, and record their responses on the sheet for later discussion and reference.<sup>34</sup> The idea was to foster discussion that would cue students to compare and contrast ideas, facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the text, and scaffold the work for struggling students who were thought to have difficulty thinking carefully about text.<sup>35</sup>

Before students broke into these pairs/threesomes, I modeled the work during each unit, using record sheets formatted just like the student record sheets, but with different text segments. I reread the segments, thought aloud about how to answer the question, invited group feedback, and recorded a response. I then worked on a second (and sometimes third) record sheet *with* the students, discussing their ideas and my own in tandem to construct a group response that I recorded on the sheet. Students then moved into their pair/threesome groups to work on their own unique record sheets.

When I reviewed the video and audio footage I found something glaring and unfortunate: when I was not present the students often did not work productively together in pairs/threesomes.

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<sup>34</sup> The record sheets were pieces of large chart paper that could be posted and were visible from afar.

<sup>35</sup> I always partnered struggling comprehenders with a typical or advanced comprehender, in order to assist their thinking.

Instead, there were many examples of students spending this time sitting in silence, participating in off-task conversations or activities, focusing solely on completing the task as quickly as possible, and being preoccupied and overwhelmed by the writing component of this work. These behaviors also overlapped at times, such as students being so fixated on completing the task that one person wrote while the other(s) sat in silence. In this section I will offer examples from across the different units of what these unproductive behaviors sounded like, and then offer counter-examples of productive pair/threesome discussions that were desired, but rarer to find in the transcripts.

### **The Opposite of Discussion: Silence**

When I used this participation structure, I assumed that students would talk with each other in order to accomplish the assigned tasks. In the data, however, students often did not speak to each other without my prompting. This was a pervasive problem that was detrimental to the work.

In this typical example, a student read the text segment the group needed to work on, then the group sat in silence until the teacher came to the group (La Bamba, Day 2):

Ali: (reading text segment<sup>36</sup>) **Manuel thought. Did he do something funny? Funny. Crazy. Hilarious. These were the words people s-, said to him. He was confused... beyond caring. All he knew was the people were playing, were paying attention to him, and his brothers and sisters looked at him with a mixture of jealousy and awe.**

(Group sits in silence for 30 seconds until the teacher approaches.)

Another manifestation of the silence was when students worked on the task, but in a parallel or turn-taking fashion, with each one taking a piece of the work for him or herself, and

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<sup>36</sup> Bolded words in the transcripts indicate reading directly from the text.

not discussing their thoughts or writing with the partner(s). Asil and Antonio did just that in this segment<sup>37</sup> (La Bamba, Day 2):

Antonio: He was *inaudible*... I think.

Asil: What?

Antonio: I think this part is when he felt good... ..

Asil: Here's green.

Antonio: Kay... .. (1.5 additional minutes of silence while Antonio writes)

Asil: We have to do both?

Antonio: Yeah. You can do the second one... ..

T:<sup>38</sup> Let's see what you guys did.

This was an unfortunate trend that persisted even when some students made attempts to change the participation norms. In a later unit, Ahlam began to write her thoughts without consulting Ali, in spite of Ali's efforts to begin a verbal exchange (Doctor, Day 3):

Ali: Kay, actions. Um, Dr. Johnson... (reading text segment) **brow raised into a frown. She bit her lower lip. She led Lupe into the roo-, bedroom?** That means she's uh, Dr. Johnson thinks that, uh, it's good for... um... .. Dr. Johnson thinks... Hmm... (Ahlam begins to write)... .. ... .. Thinks, uh... (Ahlam continues writing)... ..

Ahlam: But then she lets her in.

The students appeared not to see group discussion as a learning resource. If they couldn't come to a quick decision about what to write down, or felt insecure about the decision, they tended to wait for teacher approval rather than using further discussion to sort out their thoughts.

<sup>37</sup> Note that each ellipse stands for three seconds of silence.

<sup>38</sup> "T" indicates the teacher (myself).

Daniyah and Antonio were explicit about their decision to stop all efforts until my arrival

(Marven, Day 2):

Daniyah: (reading text segment) **As they made their way back to the sled paths, Marven heard a French song drifting through the woods. The other jacks came down the path, their saws and axes slung across their shoulders, and Marven and Jean Louis, Jean Louis joined them. Even, evening shadows fell through the trees, and as Marven skyed alongside the huge men, he hummed, he hummed the tune they were singing.**

Antonio: Hmm.

Daniyah: He feels...

Antonio: At home.

Daniyah: Mmmm. He feels...

Antonio: Included, I think.

Daniyah: Could be, yeah, maybe... Or, he could be... awed... ... No... That could be used for... .. Um... Should we wait til she comes back?

Antonio: Kay.

Silence, of course, is the opposite of what these participation structures were trying to foster. It was often present, though, as students worked independently within their partnerships or waited for the teacher's help. The examples above show long stretches of silence, and in subsequent sections there are further examples of student silence woven into excerpts that highlight other unproductive pair/threesome participatory behavior.

### **Talking to Each Other... But Not About the Work**

More problematic than sitting in silence was participating in off-task behaviors that prevented any members of the group from thinking about or completing the work. When students were uninterested in the task, they passively discouraged others from engaging, and when students were distracted by other things, they actively distracted partners. Some



distraction is to be expected in any endeavor, but the level of distraction in these pair/threesome groups often became problematic.

Being “off task” is not unique or surprising student behavior in classrooms. Students engaged in typical, age-appropriate, off-task talk that often went on parallel to on-task discussion. For example, Adel and Mustafa were friends and rivals, so after a lively debate about a point followed by my approval of Adel’s idea, this exchange was not surprising (La Bamba, Day 2):

Mustafa: That's the first time I ever seen Adel right. Ooh...

Adel: Shut up, you big fat wienie.

Exchanges like this are not especially problematic if students return quickly to the work, as these two did. But often the off-task talk was more extensive and distracting.

Many things could cause distractions. Sometimes the materials we used caused off-task discussion, particularly with respect to choosing marker colors with which to write. The discussion of marker colors, in fact, was a distraction that occurred in every pair/threesome during every unit; here is a typical example (McBroom, Day 3):

Adel: How bout you write, [I read?]<sup>39</sup>

Mustafa: [Pick a color.]

Adel: Red and blue... Wait, wait, wait. No, no, no, no, no, no. This one we can pick. See how she did black.

Mustafa: Orange.

Adel: No, not orange.

Mustafa: I love orange. Come on, man.

Adel: Come on, blue or green... Okay fine. Orange.

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<sup>39</sup> Brackets in the transcripts indicate overlapping speech.

Mustafa: Yes!

Adel: Okay, and then the next one is blue.

Another example shows a similar exchange, even when one student was trying to focus on the work (McBroom, Day 3):

Alyssa: Okay. Which participant is more [powerful?]

Farrah: [Which] color you wanna use?

Alyssa: Red.

Farrah: Green?

Alyssa: We got the same one. No, we got. Oh, everybody got that.

Farrah: Green?

Alyssa: Sure... .. Which participant is more [powerful?]

Farrah: [You] wanna do, this time this color,  
and then other color?...

Alyssa: Okay. This.

Farrah: Wanna start the first line?

Alyssa: Kay.

Alyssa was clearly trying to get to the task, but Farrah was distracted by the array of marker colors to such a degree that Alyssa could not progress with her thinking.

The school intercom announcements, which occurred during most lessons, were another chronic source of distraction. This one about the school chess club caused a student in a threesome to end up working independently (Doctor, Day 3):

(Students pause work when there is an intercom announcement about chess club meeting)

Farrah: (reading text segment) [**The doctor f-, um, fussed**, um (trails off *inaudibly*)]

Alyssa: [(*inaudible* mumbling)]

Zeina: Are you guys in? (referring to announcement about chess club)

Farrah: Not me.

Alyssa: I was about to be, [*inaudible*, but forgot to ask her.]

Farrah: **[h-, holding her hand and talking to her softly.]**

Zeina: What? [I didn't even hear you.]

Alyssa: [I don't care, I already got,] got chess at home.

Farrah: Okay, come on.

Zeina: Which school's gonna verse us?

Alyssa: [What?]

Farrah: [Wait, doctor...]

Zeina: I thought a school's gonna verse us.

Alyssa: No, [it's chess, not] =

Farrah: [Wait]

Alyssa: = *inaudible* play it.

Zeina: Oh... My cousin, my aunt, um

(Farrah writes in silence and the other two students chat *inaudibly*.)

When her attempts to bring her partners back to the task (i.e., “Come on.”) are ignored, Farrah trudged on, trying to focus on the task herself. Clearly a group discussion of the work was not occurring, and this was far from unusual; the markers and intercom announcements were chronic sources of distraction, but other isolated sources of distraction are evident in subsequent excerpts in this section.

Off-task conversations showed a range of longevity and distraction levels. Sometimes students got off-task, but the digressions were brief and didn't break the flow of the work too badly, as in the opening example between Mustafa and Adel. Other times, however, digressions became extensive and hampered the work. For example, this threesome got off-task when their class walked by in the hallway outside the room (McBoom, Day 3):

Rayanne: I see your class.

Daniyah: Where are they going?... The computer lab... They're going to the computer, Abby's crying...

Rayanne: Why?

Daniyah: I don't know. She always cries... No more my, no more of my class? No, there's probably still people. But there's still people in the class, I ain't messing around... Told you. *Inaudible* someone go by.

Rayanne: Abby, I *inaudible* in second grade, she used to cry.

Daniyah: I know. She still does. She, she... She says she's eight years old.

Rayanne: She can't be eight years old [*inaudible*]

Daniyah: [And then she] said she turned, she turned nine this... this year.

Antonio was part of this group and tried to focus on the task, like Farrah in the previous example, but Daniyah and Rayanne continued their discussion of Abby for several minutes while Antonio worked silently.

Totally off-task behavior that took up extensive amounts of time and distracted from the work was a big problem at times. Sometimes I anticipated and monitored the challenge because a particular student was chronically off-task in all settings, and other times the problematic student was only challenging in this particular participation structure and I did not realize it until I transcribed the data. If a student had a strong tendency to get off-task, it left the partner with a

choice to work essentially alone, or to follow suit. Rayanne—who had chronic bouts of resistance to the work across all units and all participation structures—completely distracted

Mustafa in this excerpt (Marven, Day 2):

Mustafa: (reading text segment) **By Friday of the second week, Marven had learned his job so well that he finished early. He had not been on his skis, (sk-is), skis... (Rayanne cracking up) since he had arrived at camp. Every day the routine was simply meals and work, and Marven kept to his office and away from the lumberjacks as much as he could. But today he wanted to explore, so he put on his skis and followed the sled paths into the woods... (Rayanne cracking up) Come on...**

Rayanne: Okay. He glided with Lupe<sup>40</sup> forward. (cracks up)... ... But today, Lupe was *inaudible* (cracks up)... Cuz she's mental. (cracks up)

Mustafa: I'm gonna do it. Look...

Rayanne: I dare you to put Lupe (cracking up) ... .. "Lupe's in the house"... (cracking up)... I dare you to put "Lupe's in the house." (cracking up)... ... I can't breathe. Oh, I can't breathe.

Mustafa: *inaudible*

(They continue *inaudibly* talking and cracking up; Mustafa starts writing on blue Post-its, which is not part of the task, and they laugh.)

Rayanne: Okay, what's the work, really?

Despite Rayanne's last utterance here, this sort of behavior continued for the full half-hour of pair/threesome work on this day and the next. She was off-task and pulled Mustafa—usually a diligent student—along with her. This was far from an isolated event. Rayanne was a constant challenge to the pair/threesome work. For example, in an earlier unit Dimah wanted to get to the work, but Rayanne questioned Dimah about whether she liked a certain musical group, whether she was still friends with a certain student, and other unrelated topics. Even when Dimah asserted her need to work, Rayanne remained off-task (Doctor, Day 3):

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<sup>40</sup> Rayanne became obsessed with the name "Lupe" from *The New Doctor* to the point that I had to address it several times with her. The name itself seemed to make her laugh and then she would bring up Lupe as a concept or just the name at random times in other units.

Dimah: = Stop, you're making me mess up. Dr. Johnson, Johnson thinks... Dr. Johnson thinks traditional, way... is... [not]

Rayanne: [Are you] still friends with Selena?

Dimah: Yeah... [*inaudible*]

Rayanne: [How come you] don't play with her?

Dimah: *inaudible*

Rayanne: Play with *inaudible*, but everybody still likes her.

Dimah: I forgot what she told us. Dr. Johnson thinks traditional way is not good so she's... she's trying? She, she's, she... so she's trying, she's try-, she's, she's trying (writes)... to, wait no, *inaudible*

Rayanne: Be

Dimah: She, oh god. She's trying to... [*inaudible*]

Rayanne: [Does Miss Currie have,] like tickets?... Like, you, you collect tickets and then you can *inaudible* everything you want at the treat sale? (Dimah nods.) Lucky! I wanna [*inaudible*]

Dimah: [Dr. John-,] Dr. Johnson thinks traditional way is not good, so she try, she, she's trying to teach... Lupe... the... .. Kay, now actions. What's her actions?

Rayanne: What?

Dimah: What's her actions?

Dimah eventually had to resign herself to doing the task alone. It's clear from these two examples—one in which Mustafa joins Rayanne's off-task behavior without much resistance and one in which Dimah struggles to stay on task—that students who resist the work are very problematic in pair/threesome participation structures.

Whereas teachers can anticipate the off-task behavior of certain students, another challenge exists when students who are usually enthusiastic and focused become off-task. Daniyah, a student who was usually a zealous participant in the whole group discussions, could become

unproductive in the pairs/threesomes. Something about the group work caused even this enthusiastic student to grow restless and distracted. She would explicitly proclaim her boredom and say things like, “Oh, it’s 2:06. Twenty-four minutes,” (La Bamba, Day 2) and “It’s 3:13 already?... Anyways, I wanna go home” (La Bamba, Day 3). Perhaps she was uninterested in the task, but her rekindled participation when I was present suggests that something about the participation structure or the difficulty level of the task caused feelings of resistance.

Immediately after a productive and lively exchange with me, for example, she and her partner were frustrated with their next text segment and Daniyah proclaimed, “Uuuuuuh. I don’t like [this. This is boring.]” (Doctor, Day 3). Daniyah frequently withdrew when the work was challenging, suddenly disengaging and saying things like “Kay, good night, I need a blanket... (puts record sheet over her face) Good night... .. I wish I could sleep.” (Doctor, Day 3).

This choice to withdraw, however, is not innocuous in pair/threesome participation structures. This excerpt shows Daniyah’s consistent behavior when she faced work without the teacher, but also how she sucked her partner into the distracted behavior too (Doctor, Day 3):

Daniyah: (reading record sheet) What do Dr. J.’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?..

Asil: Umm... ..

Daniyah: That...

Asil: How do you say that word?

Daniyah: I didn’t get enough sleep today. Yesterday. Morning. I don’t know... Cuz I had to wake up at seven o’clock.

Asil: You wake up at seven?

Daniyah: Yeah, cuz I have morning program.

Asil: Oh.

Daniyah: Ugh... Okay, when I get to my grandma's house, I'm gonna go to sleep. I'll sleep on the couch...

Asil: *inaudible*

Daniyah: Be quiet. I'll do, I'll do quotes (writes and laughs)... I never *inaudible* ... (making silly noises and writing)... I'm tired. Okay, yallah.

Asil: I think she's calming her down (referring to the characters in the text)... ... I'm tired... ...

Off-task behavior is something teachers have always dealt with, and there are many sources of chronic and occasional distraction. Such behavior can range from brief digressions that people take part in during most social activity to persistent events that inhibit the work of the group.

### **Hurry Up and Finish: A Worksheet Mentality**

The pair/threesome work was designed to let students talk to each other about the text in smaller groups, and to write about their thinking in a record sheet that could be posted for our whole group review of the work. This was important for helping everyone think about text segments they had not been assigned, so that this thinking was accessible to them during the text-based discussion and closing writing assignment.

I made efforts to avoid framing this work as a “worksheet” type of task to be completed quickly and tidily. The record sheets were large pieces of chart paper, and I modeled the work with similar sheets and made it clear during the modeling that I was thinking about the text segment and the question before putting pen to paper. I also modeled scribbling out or modifying my answers as my thinking evolved with student input. However, students often still approached the work with a focus on efficiently filling in the blank spots on the record sheet, rather than engaging in a discussion about their responses. In this example, Mustafa, Rayanne,



and Dimah (La Bamba, Day 2) were eager to get to each segment quickly and fill in the appropriate box, like a list of items they needed to check off:

Dimah: First we do this one. (reading text segment) **As he... As he twirled his forty-five record... record...**

Mustafa: Manuel.

Dimah: **Manuel thought that they had a great talent show. The entire school would be amazed. His mother and his... and father would be proud and his brothers and his sisters would be jealous and pout. It would be a night to remember.**

Mustafa: You go. (to Rayanne)

Rayanne: Oh. (reads a different text segment) **Manuel remembered how the forty-five record had dropped from his hand and rolled across the cafeteria floor. It probably got scratched, he thought, and now it was stuck and he was stuck dancing and moving his lips to the same words over and over. He had never been so embarrassed. He would have to ask his parents to move the family out of town.**

Mustafa: Alright, gimme the markers... .. The markers. Um... green. Do the green one first.

Rayanne: You have to write it here? (points at paper)

Mustafa: What? ... Oh, yeah. But first we have to finish this... He feels [good.]

Dimah: [Green or red,] cuz remember she said...*inaudible*.

Mustafa: Oh. So he feels good? (begins writing.)

The group read both of their assigned text segments in succession and discussed neither before they began filling out the record sheet. There are many examples that show a focus on filling in the record sheet instead of taking time to discuss the answer before beginning the writing.

Moreover, any discussion that did take place, *when I was not present*, usually occurred simultaneously with the writing. For example, Dimah and Asil quickly settled on a simple answer, then discussed their support of this answer as Dimah wrote (McBroom, Day 3):

Dimah: Who's more powerful, who do you think is more powerful?

Asil: Umm, I thought the kids. I mean, the [McBroom.]

Dimah: [McBroom.]

Asil: Yeah...

Dimah: Because, (writes) because... he is...

(brief discussion about how to spell "because")

Dimah: Okay... .. McBroom (continues to write)... is... pow- because... it... is... moving... the... kids... McBroom is more powerful because it is pulling the kids... and... (*inaudible* for several words) ... Kay, we finished that.

Sometimes students divided the work in order to complete the task efficiently. The previous issue of silence mixes in with this approach. This excerpt shows how Mustafa felt a need to complete the task rather than to make his thinking visible to the group, thus leaving the others to sit in silence (La Bamba, Day 2):

Mustafa: (Reading his writing under his breath) He feels good that he volunteered... for... *inaudible*... because... he... feels... good... *inaudible*... impress... his... family. (Mustafa looks up from writing.) He's also gonna make them think good thoughts. (He returns to writing, reading his writing under his breath as he goes) to... make... his... to make... his... (He stops writing and caps marker.)

Part of this focus on quickly getting to the written responses portion of the work—at the expense of time for discussion—stemmed from an inherent rush students felt to complete all the work available. There were no punitive consequences for not finishing all of their record sheets, but students were still focused on finishing as quickly as possible, even panicking at times if they felt time in the session was running out (McBroom, Day 3):

Alyssa: Six more minutes.

Farah: We won't even have time, girl... .. (Alyssa goes off to get another record sheet)

Alyssa: We gotta do it fast, *inaudible*. *Inaudible*.

Farrah: Oh, it's so easy, *inaudible*. Oh my goodness, I'm gonna do this. [Okay.]

In a similar way, students felt competitive with other groups about the pace of their work

(Doctor, Day 3):

Farrah: Okay, they're finished and we're still

Zeina: We're still on the second one and we didn't [*inaudible*]

Alyssa: [*inaudible*]

Farrah: [*inaudible*] people.

Alyssa: The first one, okay. Just write, like, uh, what we should write.

Zeina: I don't know.

Adel was explicit in his view of the work as a speed task (Doctor, Day 3):

Adel: We're wasting time. They're gonna beat us.

Antonio: It's not a race, stupid.

In spite of this focus on speed, students also valued being objectively correct. When I would come around to check on their progress, often the focus was not on sharing their thinking, but on whether or not they were “right,” which was evident when Mustafa said things like, “Please don't tell me we messed up. I better not messed up” (McBroom, Day 3). In fact, this desire to get the right answer paralyzed the work at points (McBroom, Day 3):

Adel: The kids [are stronger, the family]

Mustafa: [No, shh. I'm just gonna put,] I'm just gonna put 'the' and wait for her.

Adel: The family was

Mustafa: I know, I know... I know, I know.

Adel: Okay, the family is stronger because [*inaudible*]

Mustafa:

[No.]

Mustafa did not want to write anything, or even talk about what to write until I was there to offer approval or correction.

Students were preoccupied with both speed and correctness. In fact, even when they were in no danger of falling behind, and were given extension tasks, they were focused on doing the work quickly and perfectly, rather than thoughtfully (McBroom, Day 3):

T: Okay, you guys, if those three are good I'm gonna give you one more, okay?

Mustafa: Oooh. Let's make this one the best.

Adel: Yeah. Wullah<sup>41</sup>. No more mistakes.

Mustafa: No more mistakes.

T: Don't worry about mistakes. You're learning.

Adel: So this is our biggest challenge?

T: These ones are a little trickier. You gotta think about them, [okay?]

Mustafa: [No,] it's not a tricky, watch.

Adel: Yeah.

Mustafa: I'm, I'm gonna get it two seconds.

Adel: We're smart.

Not only did Mustafa and Adel want to finish in “two seconds,” they wanted to finish it “with no mistakes.” These two criteria were not seen as oppositional by the students. This emphasis on speed and ease caused students to neglect discussion, and also to give up easily when examining

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<sup>41</sup> “Wullah” is an Arabic phrase that translates to something like “swear to God” or “hand to God.” It is often used colloquially to add emphasis to someone’s statement.

tricky text segments and wait for the teacher or work on a different record sheet. Dimah and Asil exhibited this behavior. First they abandoned a difficult text segment (Marven, Day 2):

Asil:        Alright... Marven felt... .. scared or nervous.

Dimah:     No, he feels... wait... .. (looks at feelings chart)... ..

Asil:        Um... ..

Dimah:     *Inaudible*... ..

Asil:        *Inaudible*

Dimah:     Let me see. (looks at record sheet)... .. Let's do a different one...  
(flips to another record sheet)

Asil:        It's hard... ..

Even though there had been little effort to discuss the material, they gave up and moved to a different record sheet.

Students approached the pair/threesome work with a focus on finishing the task quickly and correctly, which they didn't see as oppositional criteria. This approach inhibited discussion as a means for doing the work.

### **Writer's Block: When the Writing Component of the Work Stymied the Group**

When I transcribed and reviewed the data, one of the most obvious findings about the small group work was that the students were highly preoccupied with the writing portion of the work. The previous section about their desire to complete the work quickly and correctly foreshadowed some of this. Students were very focused on who was going to write, on using correct spelling and conventions (in spite of my reminders not to worry about that too much), and on equating the role of the writer with the role of the thinker.

**“Who’s gonna write?”** The assignment of the writing duty was clearly a focus in the group work. In this excerpt, Mustafa displayed its priority in his mind when I instructed the groups to begin the work (La Bamba, Day 2):

T: You guys can start.

Mustafa: You're supposed to put this on top, right? ... .. Okay, who's gonna write?

Dimah: What page is that?

Mustafa: One hundred sixty-six.

Dimah: This is one hundred seventy-seven.

Mustafa: You're writing? ... You're writing?

Dimah: Huh?

Mustafa: You writing?

Dimah: Huh?

Mustafa: Are you writing? She says somebody has to write.

Rayanne: You write it. (to Mustafa)

Dimah: No, you write.

Mustafa: Be glad to.

Similarly, this threesome initiated the work by assigning writers to each record sheet in front of them (McBroom, Day 3):

Rayanne: [Antonio's] doing it first cuz I wanna be at the end.

Antonio: No, I'm doing the last one. [You always do the last.]

Daniyah: [I like doing this one.] Yeah, you always do the last one. I, I'm gonna do...

Rayanne: I'm gonna do the second one.

Daniyah: I'm gonna do second. I'm just kidding. I'll do the first one.

Rayanne: Antonio first.

Even some of the students grew exasperated with the time spent deciding who was going to write, and in which color, as Antonio did here (Doctor, Day 3):

Adel: Are you gonna write?

Antonio: [Yeah.]

Adel: [No,] not orange.... This, uh, this blue. Not this... *inaudible*.

Antonio: Just let me do it.

Adel: Wullah, it's blue.

Antonio: You can do it if you want... You do it.

Adel: You know I'm not writing.

Antonio: Oh my god. (exasperated sigh)

Adel: Do it.

These sorts of digressions from the work to debate writing duties were ubiquitous in the data.

**“How do you spell it?”** The decisions about who would write took up a lot of time, but the actual writing also took up valuable time that could have been spent in discussion. Once students assigned the text segments to each other, the writers were assisted (or requested assistance) in order to get the writing as perfect as possible. This occurred despite my frequent reminders that I was concerned with the content, not the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation. And it occurred in spite of the “sentence starters” that I provided them to begin each writing portion of the work.<sup>42</sup>

This quest for perfect looking papers was evident in student concerns over crossing things out, using arrows, and even the most basic elements of writing, such as handwriting. Even when

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<sup>42</sup> Examples include “Manuel feels good/bad about volunteering because...” and “Marven feels...”

I encouraged students to revise and modeled using revision in the work we did together, some students were resistant and focused on having perfect papers (McBroom, Day 3):

T: Bent the gun, and, you're right, and the bear is coming. Right? Okay? So can we change it to that? The wind is more powerful because

Mustafa: We're always crossing out, can we just restart?

T: No. Who cares about crossing out? It shows you guys are thinking.

Mustafa: It doesn't look good.

T: Ohmigosh. Crossing out shows you're revisiting your thoughts and making it better.

In another example, Riad relinquished the writing responsibility out of self-consciousness about his handwriting (La Bamba, Day 2):

Riad: We need, red. ...

Farrah: Do you wanna write?

Riad: I have bad handwriting. Do you have bad handwriting? I have bad handwriting.

Some students had exchanges about handwriting that showed such preoccupation, the excerpts are both distressing and comical to review. Mustafa and Adel had ongoing commentary about each other's handwriting (McBroom, Day 3):

Adel: Man, you write horrible.

Mustafa: Huh?

Adel: You write horrible.

Mustafa: I messed up, man. It's cuz, look how [it's bended.]

Adel: [inaudible]

Mustafa: Look where it's bended, man. Look where

Adel: It's okay. Okay.



Even when I was present to focus the work, these concerns about handwriting were distracting

(McBroom, Day 3):

T: Okay, let's look at this one, (*inaudible* reading record sheet to self) You guys are doing great. (*inaudible* reading record sheet to self) The wind was... [blowing]

Adel: [Bending]

T: Bending, the gun, and blew [everything away.]

Adel: [Told you.]

Mustafa: [What?!] She, she, she, she was stuttering on it. See? I, I [I fixed your N.]

Adel: [Because the N.]

Mustafa: It looks like an H.

Adel: It's a N!... Oh be quiet, man.

Excerpts like this show that beyond assigning writers and choosing marker colors, the very act of writing became a distraction for students and used up valuable time.

Far more often, however, students were concerned with spelling. The transcripts are rife with segments very similar to the following (La Bamba, Day 2):

Mustafa: (Looks up from writing) He volunteered?

Dimah: Yeah.

Mustafa: I don't know how to spell it. (returns to writing)

Rayanne: It says it right here.

Mustafa: Where? (looks over)

Dimah: It's right there.

Mustafa: Oh. (laughs) It's volunteering. (returns to writing)

Rayanne: I can spell it for you.

Mustafa: You know how? How?

(30 seconds of talk about how to spell "volunteered")

Students sometimes even took over for the writers when they wanted to get the spelling and conventions right. Daniyah took over for Rayanne here, but then Rayanne became her critic (McBroom, Day 3):

Daniyah: That's catch... ... They, you sh-, no [hold on.]

Rayanne: [I can't] [*inaudible*]

Daniyah: [No, no, no] watch, watch.  
(Daniyah takes the marker from Rayanne.) I'll fix it... Put that, put the carat... The family's more powerful because they are catching...

Rayanne: [The wind.]

Antonio: [The wind.] The [prairie wind.]

Daniyah: [The wind.]

Rayanne: That's not how you spell summer.

Daniyah: I put, that's, it looks like a "A" but it's not... [Cuz I had the] =

Antonio: [Sammer]

Daniyah: = ... the

Rayanne: Oh.

Daniyah: The U was

Antonio: In the sam-, sammer.

Daniyah: Sammer.

This might not seem like a major challenge in the work, but if we consider that this thirty-second allotment of time to spelling was occurring multiple times per segment, and that groups worked on two to four segments per session, the amount of time spent on spelling quickly added up.

The time spent on spelling was compounded when there were students who struggled a lot with writing, which took up time with spelling but also interrupted the cohesion in their thought processes. The examples that illustrate this are tedious to read, such as this excerpt in which Antonio assisted Asil—a struggling student—with her writing (La Bamba, Day 2):

Asil: (beginning to write) He felt bad, do we start with?

Antonio: He feel... bad. ... ..

Asil: Feeled?

Antonio: Feels...

Asil: D? Or

Antonio: S... Bad (looking on as Asil writes)... .. About... .. Volunteering... ..  
Volunteering... .. Because... .. Hmm... ..

Asil: His record, um

Antonio: No, he wasn't paying attention to that, but... .. because... because he...  
feels bad... (heavy sigh)... ..

Asil: Bad?...

Antonio: No, he was nervous? ... ..

Asil: *inaudible*

Antonio: N-e... .. -v-ous... .. About... .. Messing... M... E... S... Put two "esses."  
*inaudible*... i-n-g... the...

Asil: The?...

Antonio: *Inaudible*... .. Up... .. (reaches over with another marker and starts  
marking the record sheet)

Asil: What are you doing?

Antonio: You have to underline from "because" to "because... volunteering about."... And there has to be... ... That has to be an "E" I think. No, right here. [*inaudible*]

Asil: [*inaudible*]

Antonio: Yeah, add an E... ... Okay... ... We're done.

Antonio's frustration with this process was evident, especially when he got to the point of doing the underlining for Asil because he simply wants to move the process along. Alyssa experienced similar frustration with Farrah (McBroom, Day 3):

Alyssa: Um, the McBroom family... um... [uh]

Farrah: [*inaudible*] [The McBroom family.] I, I thought

Alyssa: [Did,] did things to, protect their farm.

Farrah: (writing) Did... ... things... ... to protect, to per-... tect... pertect

Alyssa: Pro.

Farrah: Pertect. Per. Per. How do you spell "per"?

Alyssa: P [Per... Per...]

Farrah: [R-U-E?]

Alyssa: Oh! I think it... Yeah, P-E-R. P-E-R. P-E-R...

Farrah: U-E

Alyssa: T... [E]

Farrah: [Pertect]

Alyssa: [C]

Farrah: [Pertect] Let me ask Miss K.

Alyssa: Wait, it's P-E-R...

Farrah: P

Alyssa: T-E... C-T. P-E-R

Farrah: B?

Alyssa: P-E-R, T-E-C-T.

Farrah: Wait, *inaudible*

Alyssa: Ohmigod. Just, just write it however you want. It doesn't matter, the spelling, she said.

The focus on perfect spelling became problematic in another way, however, because students would change content or resist expressing important ideas because they felt unable to spell them. Here, Adel and Daniyah discussed why Manuel regrets his decision to volunteer for the talent show (La Bamba, Day 2):

Adel: Oh! He felt bad because no one was paying attention to him. Everyone was just sitting there.

Daniyah: (gasps) That's good... So it's red right? Yeah.

Adel: You wouldn't think it.

Daniyah: Shut up. (begins writing)... .. He... was feeling... bad... because... Because what? Tell me.

Adel: Uh, because no one was clapping [for him.]

Daniyah: [No one]

Adel: Oh, no one was paying attention to him.

Daniyah: I don't know how to spell paying attention.

Adel: Oh, okay, no one was clapping for him.

The change they made is subtle, but “paying attention” would have been a better answer because the clapping is really just a representation of what Manuel really wants: attention. So in this

way, writing conventions disrupted thinking about the content. Again, the transcripts contain dozens more examples of this kind of talk about handwriting and spelling.

**“You do it.”** The student who took on the role of the writer sometimes was also assigned the role of the thinker. This is implicitly evident in many of the examples in the section on group silence, in which whoever was writing would take on the responsibility of deciding what to write, without input from the group. The ownership of the content was solely the writer’s.

Daniyah spoke explicitly of this dual role (La Bamba, Day 2):

Adel: Okay, okay, so what to write... What to write?

Daniyah: I don't know.

Adel: Um, like, okay, what to write?

Daniyah: Why do you keep asking me? I'm not the writer here.

Daniyah’s perspective was not unusual and was echoed by Farrah (Doctor, Day 3):

Farrah: Okay, (reading record sheet) what do Dr. Johnson action tell us about... wh- okay.... Wait (to Alyssa) this time you're thinking.

Zeina: And me. Don't forget me.

Farrah: Okay because I already [thought about]

Alyssa: [You. You don't even] talk yet.

Zeina: Mm-hmm.

Farrah: I already thought about those.

Farrah expressed the idea that since she is not the writer, she does not need to think. She and Daniyah were explicit in these examples, but this idea is also implicit in much of the data and very troublesome.

The writing component of the pair/threesome work presented many distractions that were detrimental to the work. Students spent a lot of precious discussion time assigning writing roles,

worrying about the tidiness of their papers and conventions of their writing. Most worrisome, they felt that unless they were writing, they were not responsible for thinking about the work.

### Counter-evidence

Despite these discouraging trends, there are examples in the data of students trying to work productively in groups. The reason the problematic behaviors of the previous sections are so worrisome is because they inhibit the types of exchanges shown in the following counter-examples, and fostering this type of talk is so important for multiple reasons. The discussion can support the building of basic understanding of the text, such as when Alyssa and Kamel talked enough about one segment that a misconception held by Alyssa was revealed (Marven, Day 2):

Alyssa: Um... so wait. (reading record sheet) Marven feels excited and relieved because... he found out... that... [was]

Kamel: [There] was no grizzly...

Alyssa: But there was a grizzly.

Kamel: No, there wasn't. That was... eh, what are they talk about, it was actually.

Alyssa: Oh, no. But, he saw the grizzly at first, and then he saw a big shadow and he thought it was another one.

Kamel: No he's, no, remember, it sound like a grizzly, eh, eh, *inaudible*, guy that found it, he, Marven said, "I thought you were a grizzly" to that guy that he found.

This talk can also help students develop their ideas. Farrah and Ahlam built on each other's flow of talk, co-constructing a complete response to the question about Jean Louis's feelings (Marven, Day 2):

Farrah: He's scared because... nervous because he's scared...

Ahlam: They might wake up...

Farrah: To... .. He's scared for, might they wa-, might

Ahlam: They might wake up... ..

Farrah: I think we should write, he's scared because, um, he's, Marven feels nervous because he's, um, scared. Marven feels nervous because he's scared if they get, um, =

Ahlam: Angry.

Farrah: = cranky, and... [angry.]

Ahlam: [Angry.]

Farrah: (writes) scared... if... on of the... one...

Ahlam: Of...

Farrah: Them... Of them.

Ahlam: One of them... gets cranky... ..

Farrah: Cranky... .. *inaudible*...

Ahlam: *inaudible*...

Farrah: He'll, that, they'll hurt him.

When the ideas are challenging, it is both imperative that the students wrestle with the ideas and yet harder for the students to handle independently. Discussion can help, when we can overcome the obstacles described above. The following lengthy excerpt is an example of the kind of discussion I was hoping to foster with this curriculum (McBroom, Day 2):

Zeina: (reading text segment) **The next gusty day that came along, we put it to work for us. I made a wind plow. I rigged a bedsheet and tackle to our old farm plow. Soon as a breeze sprung up I'd go tacking to and fro over the farm, plowing as I went. Our son Chester once plowed the entire farm in under three minutes...**

Ali: Okay, what... What is the wind doing?... ..

Riad: Uh, the wind is... ..

Zeina: The breeze.



Ali: Uh, the wind is, uh, is helping the... He-, Didn't it help him plow faster?

Riad: It's saying, um... (reading text segment) **I rigged a, a bedsheet and tackle our old farm plow. Soon as a breeze sprung, sprung up I'd go taking to fro over the farm.** The wind is helping them... ... plow faster.

Zeina: Plow?

Ali: Yeah, plow [fast.]

Riad: [Because,] the wind is pushing, [him,] =

Ali: [Like]

Riad: = and it's pushing [the plow too.]

Ali: [It's like when you] push someone, and you, they go real fast.

Riad: Yeah, like, if I push my baby cousin, he'll go (does a fast hand gesture) faster.

Ali: Fast.

Riad: Cuz, it's, see how the whole story talks about heavy wind. Not just, like, light wind. Talks about, heavy wind, like, pushing them hard. Pushing, uh, pail of milk, and [pushing the cow.]

Zeina: [Yeah. I would say] yeah.

Riad: So. The wind is helping them. (Zeina begins writing.)

Ali: Helping them plow faster... ...

Zeina: [What's]

Ali: [Uh]... The McBrooms, [uh]

Riad: [No, orange.]

Ali: They're...They're what's it called? They're =

Riad: Orange.

Ali: = th-, they're, uh, plowing it.  
Like, McBroom and the, who was it? That lost control?

Zeina: Chester.

Ali: Chester was, uh, like he was [steering] =

Riad: [Ch-]

Ali: = it. Like he was [steering.]

Riad: [Chester] was steering the plow to him? Chester (Zeina begins writing)... was... [steering]...

Ali: [Steering]...

Riad: The plow to him....

Ali: The [plow]

Riad: [Plow]. Plow. To him... ...

Ali: Uh... Which one is more powerful.

Zeina: I think wind.

Ali: Uh, the wind.

Zeina: Because it's doing all the work for them.

Ali: Yeah, and he's [just steering.]

Riad: [Yeah, and it,] it's doing the work for them, right?

Ali: Yeah, [so]

Zeina: [inaudible]

Riad: Which makes the McBrooms stronger, because the, they're making the wind do the work for them... So they're stronger. [They're controlling wind.]

Ali: [The wind is act-, ] the wind is actually pulling them more.

- Riad: Yeah, but, do you, if you, like... Say you were out on the field, pushing it (mimes pushing the plow)... The wind doesn't w-, uh, the wind, it's not like it's moving everywhere around. You're controlling the, where you wanna go, so you're... You're making the wind kinda do your work. So you're, it's like, you're controlling somebody. Say I tell you to write, I'm a, I'm controlling you. Like the wind? They're controlling the wind cuz the wind is doing all their work.
- Ali: Huh... yeah.
- Riad: The wind is doing the work. All's he has to do is turn the plow tool.
- Ali: Yeah, it's *inaudible*.
- Riad: It's pretty much the wind, right? (Zeina goes to write.) No, no, I meant the person...
- Ali: Uh, the... McBroom. The...
- Zeina: Family.

This exchange showed all three students engaged in talking and listening to each other, recalling facts from the story, checking their understanding of the facts and the question, making text-to-self connections, debating nuanced points, and making synthesis statements, which all led to a high-quality response. This type of exchange is what I wanted to see more. Unfortunately, the examples of unproductive talk outweigh the examples of productive talk in each unit, when I was not present with the group.

### **Teacher Moves: Scaffolding Text Analysis for Pairs/Threesomes**

Despite the productivity struggles pairs/threesomes displayed when they were left alone, the work that groups ultimately produced was accurate, informative, and facilitated productive TBDs and sources of evidence during the writing. When I considered this, it occurred to me that I was often present with the groups for periods of their work, which changed those dynamics. I

concluded that my presence in the groups helped them overcome their problems—at least somewhat—and work productively with the text.

Therefore, I reviewed the transcripts from the work within this participation structure when I *was* present to identify patterns in my instructional moves. I analyzed the conversations I had with pairs/threesomes and looked for teaching moves I made, beyond the expected ones that got them back on task and clarified general directions. Although there were a variety of teaching moments that were idiosyncratic to the particular unit, student, or task, three particular moves were present across units, groups, and temporal contexts and appeared to be productive to the work, both during the teacher-student talk and in the resulting written work produced by the groups. These three moves—which I am calling targeting, orienting, and prompting for evidence—are particularly important for students working with specific segments of the text, as the FGA pedagogy framework suggests. In this section, I will offer examples from across the different units of what these teacher moves sounded like and how students responded to them.

To contextualize these moves, I want to emphasize that one of the signature elements of the FGA pedagogy is the focus on specific segments of the text. Although the students have read the entire text through already, when they revisit the text with a particular question or language feature in mind they are asked to revisit assigned text segments. This allows students to pay close attention to a particular sample of language and ideas, and ensures that they consider the most important parts of the text as they develop their understanding of the “big idea.” It also allows subtle aspects of the text to be spotlighted and dynamic aspects of the text to be tracked through different stages of the narrative.

### **Targeting**

In these units, students often needed reminders to focus on their assigned segments. I called my moves to remind them “targeting.” I was cued to make such moves when students answered questions based on ideas that were not part of their specific segments. Their general answers to the guiding question might have been correct or incorrect, but in either case, when I pressed for support of their answers they would show a lack of focus on the focal text segment; instead, they would cite the text in general or the ultimate resolution of the text, cite a different segment of text, or cite nothing supportive of their answer.

My targeting moves were attempts to resolve this problem, cuing students to focus on the language and ideas contained in their assigned text segment. These moves varied. Sometimes, I simply started reading the specific segment aloud, or asked a student to do so. Sometimes, I drew their attention to a specific phrase within the segment that challenged their reasoning. There were also times when I asked them to show me support for their answer from the segment. These moves served to remind students to attend to the specific text segments of interest; examples are presented below.

When students were not focused on their assigned segment, they sometimes cited their global knowledge of the entire text. For example, Mustafa’s support for his claim that Manuel would agree to participate in next year’s talent show was derived from the story’s final outcome, not the information in his text segment. In fact, Mustafa was confused about the location of his assigned text segment in the story arc (La Bamba, Day 2):

T:           What are you guys writing?

Mustafa:   He feels good because, um... because he is, like, amazed that he made it through the talent show?

T:           He was amazed that he made it through the talent show. Okay, let's look back at page 166 for a second. Because the problem is, he hasn't done the talent show yet.

Mustafa: No, he...

T: (reading text segment) **As he twirled his forty-five record.** This is when Manuel is at the rehearsal. (reading text segment) **Manuel sat in a folding chair, twirling his record on his thumb.** This is when he's [watching everyone.]

Mustafa: [Ohhh.]

T: So let's read it again knowing that this is the rehearsal.

The cue to reread the segment, keeping in mind where it is located in the story, helped the group to justify their assessment of Manuel's feelings *in this moment* and with corresponding reasons for the assessment. Mustafa revised (and improved) his earlier answer:

Mustafa: He feels good cuz his, uh, thoughts would be, um, good, that there ... a lot of people are proud and amazed of it? Cuz of it?

Sometimes students would cite something outside of the text entirely, such as a text connection the students had constructed. These connections can be helpful, but also have the potential to cause students to project distracting information onto the characters and text and draw unsupported conclusions, as Riad did here when analyzing Marven's feelings (Marven. Day 2):

T: (reading record sheet) Marven feels excited because he finally has time to go skiing, and he wants to, and he wants to see these woods, right? So can we add that on there, in this little [space, do you think?]

Riad: [Yeah... But, um,]... Uh, over here... ... I forget what I was gonna say.

T: Well then, you were talking about, but maybe he's, um... all of sudden, he might be worried, "What if I forgot something?"

Riad: Oh yeah. He's not gonna be that excited, because then, um... he just finished from work and sometimes when my dad comes home from work, he's not, and I tell him, "Let's go play outside," cuz usually, I wanna play with him outside in the snow, usually comes and shovels the snow and plays with us [sometimes?]

- T: [Yeah?]
- Riad: My big brother, but, I wanted to do it, let my dad come with us this time, but then he said, "No, I'm too tired," and stuff.
- T: Oh yeah. So he feels, uninterested because of all the work he has to do. I don't think anything =
- Riad: Uninterested, yeah.
- T: = I, I, I don't think anything in here tells us he seems tired. I, I do hear the connection you're making, and it would make sense, but I don't think the author tells us, he doesn't seem tired, does he, if he's about to go skiing, off in the woods?

My targeting moves that drew attention to Marven's desire to ski helped Riad let go of his connection when it didn't match the meaning conveyed by the segment's language.

When students were not focused on their assigned segment, they sometimes did not offer any support for their positions. For example, students exhibited the "worksheet" approach described earlier when they rushed to find an answer without any attempts to cite support for the answer. I addressed this through targeting moves as well. When students were rushing to give an answer (particularly to a binary question, such as Manuel feeling bad or good), I cued them to take the time to thoroughly read their assigned segment, as I did with Antonio and Asil here (La Bamba, Day 2):

- T: So (reading text segment) **Manuel remained behind the stage shivering with fear.**
- Antonio: **He mouthed the words to La Bamba and.** I think he felt bad.
- T: Finish the whole thing. **He mouthed the words to La Bamba and swayed from left to right. Why did he raise his hand and volunteer? Why couldn't he have just sat there like the rest of the kids and not said anything?** How's he feeling?
- Asil: [Bad.]

Antonio: [Bad.]

T: Why do you guys say that?

Asil: [Because he, he feels nervous.]

Antonio: [Cuz he's feeling nervous.] *inaudible*

T: What's he nervous about? Tell me a little more.

Asil: [About, um, dancing and singing.]

Antonio: [Like, may-, maybe] uh, just singing. What if he says something wrong?

T: Yeah, so he's, he feels nervous that maybe he's gonna mess up.

After cuing them to target their segment and read it carefully, they co-constructed a more complete response to the question.

Aside from addressing problematic behavior, targeting moves helped in several other ways. They helped to clear up misunderstandings. In this example, Antonio and Daniyah were misinterpreting a segment in which Marven is faced with a grizzly bear. They interpreted Marven's thoughts about his family members back home to mean that he is worried about their safety, which is not the case since they are miles from the bear (Marven, Day 2):

T: When we reread it, at, the, I'm trying to think about what you guys were saying, that maybe he's worried about them, about their safety, but what does he say at the end? He says, (reading text segment) **he belonged [in Duluth with them,] =**

Daniyah: **Duluth with them]** **[in**

T: **= not in the middle of the great north woods with a grizzly.** So that makes me think what Antonio's saying. He wants to be with his family.

Targeting moves also helped students notice subtleties in the character's words and actions, revealing the richness created by the authors' word choices. The following example illustrates



students' growing understanding of just how gradually Dr. Johnson's starts to accept Manulita

(Doctor, Day 3):

T: Now, let's see if the rest of her words say, show the same thinking, or if her thinking changes. Then she says, (reading text segment) **It's not going to be a good birth if she is so upset. Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer.** So what do those words tell us she's thinking?

Alyssa: That, she might be thinking about letting her help.

T: Say it a little louder, Alyssa?

Alyssa: That she might be, um, thinking about letting, um, Manuelita help.

T: Well, she is, gonna let Manuelita help, cuz she's telling her to go get her. So if she's gonna let Manuelita help, she thinks...

Alyssa: That maybe she could help?

T: She thinks that maybe Manuelita could help. Now let's look a little more closely here, though. She says, (reading text segment) **Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here.** She doesn't say, "Maybe Manuelita could help me." [She says,] =

Alyssa: [Ohhh.]

T: = "Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this Manuelita just to be here." So why does she want Manuelita now? If she's not gonna let her help, she's just gonna let her be there.

Alyssa: [Cuz the lady?]

Farrah: [Oh, like, just to, like,]

T: What?

Alyssa: Cuz the lady?

T: Cuz the lady.

This careful attention to their segment helped the students see that even when Dr. Johnson sent for Manuelita, it was to appease the distressed patient, not because her thinking about traditional

medicine had changed yet. This attention to subtlety is also important when reading about participants that are not people or animals (such as the wind in the following example). For such participants, the behaviors that are implicit, rather than explicitly stated by the author,<sup>43</sup> might be missed by readers who don't think of these participants as active characters. Notice below how I made targeting moves to focus students' attention to their text segment, rereading it carefully to decide on the wind's implied actions (McBroom, Day 3):

Daniyah: This is, the wind is not doing anything. (reading text segment) **The next gusty that came along, we put it to [work for us.]**

T: [Ooh.] The wind is doing something.

Daniyah: What is it doing?

T: Kay. (reading text segment) **The next gusty day that came along, we put it to work for us. I made a wind plow.** What does the wind plow look like again?

Daniyah: It looks like this. (starts flipping through the text) It looks like a boat.

T: [Yeah.]

Antonio: [Yeah,] the boat.

T: Like a sailboat. What makes a sailboat go?

Daniyah: Right there (points at picture). [The wind.]

Antonio: [Air.]

Daniyah: The a-, the water.

Antonio: The...

T: Nope.

Daniyah: The [air.]

Antonio: [Oh,] air.

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<sup>43</sup> The use of the FGA metalanguage *participant* is part of this work, and will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

Daniyah: [Air.]

T: [The,] the [wind.]

Antonio: [The wind,] the wind.

T: And what makes a wind plow go?...

Daniyah: [The]

Antonio: [The wind.]

T: The wind. When they move the sail, they're not controlling the speed. All they're doing is what, you remember?

Antonio: They're =

Daniyah: They're

Antonio: = turning it.

T: Steering it, yeah, turning it.

Daniyah: The wind is doing the [speed.]

T: [But] the wind is making it go. (reading text segment) **So as, soon as a breeze sprung up I'd go tacking to and fro over the farm, plowing as I went. Our son Chester once plowed the entire farm in under three minutes.** Could they do that without the wind?

Antonio: No.

Daniyah: No.

T: So what's the wind doing?

Antonio: It's, [uh,] =

Daniyah: [It's]

Antonio: = mo-, uh... steer-, no, not [steering. It's]

Daniyah: [It's hel-,] it's, [uh]

Antonio: [It's] helping, the,

Daniyah: It's [moving the] =

Antonio: [The McBroom family]

Daniyah: = the, the windplow.

T: Yes.

Antonio: It's hel-, it's helping the McBroom plo-, plow faster.

This segment also illustrates how FGA pedagogy can weave together with other pedagogical moves. The students above needed to be reminded about the background knowledge they had constructed about how sails work, which is a well-established move for supporting students' work with text. This background knowledge also acted as a "targeting" move and supported them in looking carefully at one segment of the text and attributing the events to the correct participant.

Targeting is especially helpful with texts that contain strings of action in which events are changing rapidly. Here, I help Asil and Dimah focus on their particular segment within a larger text section about McBroom battling the wind (McBroom, Day 2):

T: Okay, now here's the, you guys have a tricky part here, because we were talking about how the wind is good and bad in these couple scenes, right? But let's just concentrate on the part you have. So his kids are already gone. That already happened, okay? Now he, he's running to the barn to get his wind plow. (reading text segment) **Didn't I streak along, though! I was making better time than the young'uns.** That means he's going faster than they're even going. So is he catching up to them?

Asil: Yeah.

T: Yeah. Um... He steered around all this stuff. (reading text segment) **I gained rapidly on the young'uns.** So he's catching up. **They were still holding hands. Before long I was within hailing distance.** So that means he's getting close enough to wave at them and throw stuff to them. [So here] =

Asil: [And he, like,]

T: = who's more powerful. Remember, it's not just strength. It's who's getting what they want here?

Dimah: [Um]

Asil: [Um]... uh

Dimah: McBroom.

T: Why is McBroom getting what he wants?

Asil: Because he's catching up to the kids.

T: Yes, exactly. McBroom is getting what he wants. He's catching up to his kids. Perfect.

It is valuable to note that targeting can be done in a number of ways, through teacher action or other structures. For the “New Doctor” unit, there was a structure in place that helped reinforce the idea of focusing on the specific text segment. Dr. Johnson’s *saying* and *doing* processes were written in a different color, and the record sheet questions asked them to attend to what each of these processes showed about Dr. Johnson’s thoughts and feelings. In this way, the cue to target was present even when the teacher was not there, which shows how this scaffold can be created outside of teacher presence. Still, within these highlighted sections of their assigned segments, sometimes students still needed a cue to target *every* part of the segment and consider it carefully. Here I cue Antonio and Adel to look closely at everything Dr. Johnson says to form a more complete response to the question about what Dr. Johnson is thinking (McBroom, Day 3):

T: Okay, so we definitely know this idea of witchcraft makes us think that Manuelita's a bad doctor, not a real doctor, that her medicines are bad. So that's one thing you should definitely put. I also want you to think of this part. "I won't have that." What else does that mean?

Antonio: Like, she, she doesn't want [Manuelita]

Adel: [Like, no, no.] She, uh, she doesn't have a witchcraft. She's talking about herself, like, "Why would I have a witchcraft? I'm a doctor, a real one."

T: Yeah, yeah. So she thinks that has no part of =

Adel: Yeah.

T: = her.

Adel: Herself.

T: Yeah, of her medicine. Like she doesn't want it to be any part of it. Right.

This idea of targeting *every* part of the segment is especially important for teachers to keep in mind during dynamic passages in the text, such as when Dr. Johnson is relenting on her adamant stance against Lupe's presence in the birthing room (Doctor, Day 3):

T: (reading text segment) "**I don't know, you really shouldn't,**" and then she says, "**Oh, very well come with me.**" (reading record sheet) Dr. Johnson thinks that Lupe shouldn't go into the room with Josefa. Right. You have that perfectly up here. Now how bout here when she goes, "Oh, very well, come with me."

Adel: Yeah, that was, I was *inaudible*.

T: So

Antonio: Like, um

Adel: Then she changed her mind.

Targeting moves help address problematic student behavior, such as failing to support answers with the text or supporting answers with text that is not accurate or appropriate. The targeting moves also help students check their understanding of text, notice subtleties, and track changes in complex sections. In fact, the idea of targeting is simply an explicit reinforcing of the FGA pedagogical practice of assigning specific text segments to each group, which "targets" that part of the text for them. The moves I made supported them in this task.

## **Orienting**

In these units, students often began their analysis of a segment with misunderstandings about where it fell in the chain of events of the story. I called my moves to correct this “orienting.” I had tried to address this in the planning by listing page numbers before each segment and encouraging students to return to the text if they needed to remember when the segment occurred, but students rarely did this, and when they did they usually just located the segment and reread from the copy of the text, without reading any of the surrounding text to orient themselves. Partners often failed to correct each other about such misunderstandings, either because they weren’t explicit enough for the partner to realize or because the partner was equally confused.

My orienting moves were attempts to resolve this problem, cuing students to think about the context surrounding their assigned text segment. These moves varied. Sometimes, I explicitly told them how the segment fit with other important events in the story. Sometimes, I used questions to get students to think about the context. Sometimes, I walked them through especially-challenging segments with a mixture of explicit guidance and questioning. These moves served to help students place their specific text segment of interest within the overall arc of the narrative; examples are presented below.

I frequently made moves proximal to rereading the text segment that had to do with orienting the students to when this segment occurred in the story, as in this example (La Bamba Day 2):

T: Go back one page. 172. ... Kay, so here's that part. "What am I doing here?" It's right in the middle... Um, yeah. So this is the middle of his performance, but it's before... See, this is the segment you're doing... It's before his record gets stuck. So that's important to remember. His record hasn't gotten stuck yet. And what is he saying? What does it say here?

Sometimes I tried to get the students more actively involved in this contextualizing of the text segment (La Bamba, Day 2):

T:            Alright. (reading text segment) **As he twirled his forty-five record, Manuel thought that, um, Manuel thought they had a great talent show. The entire school would be amazed. His mother and father would be proud** When is this?

Ali:           At school.

T:            Yeah, but is this during the show, after the show, right before the show?

Alyssa:      Before the [show.]

T:                                [The rehearsal.]

Ahlam:      Before the show?

T:            Let's look back. Page 166. What's hap- Where is he right now? What's happening? (Students flip to the page.) [This isn't the show yet. Where's he at?]

Ali:    [Oh, he's at home. He's at home.]

Alyssa:      Rehearsal?

T:            No (to Ali). Yeah, what did you say, Alyssa?

Alyssa:      Rehearsal?

T:            He's at the rehearsal. So this isn't even the show yet. Okay?

Sometimes the text itself makes orienting especially challenging, and anticipating student confusion during these segments is helpful. At two points in *La Bamba*, Manuel reflects on a first grade experience, once in a lengthy description of the memory and once in a reference to that memory. These temporal shifts in the story can confuse students about their focus with respect to their assigned segment and the entire narrative. Kamel was confused about which moment we were focused on when we considered Manuel's feelings, and I made moves to orient him to how this segment fit with the event he was focusing on (La Bamba, Day 2):



Zeina: (reading text segment) **After Mr. Roybal ripped the needle across the record, Manuel slowed his dance steps to a halt. He didn't know what to do except bow to the audience, which applauded wildly, and scoot off stage, on the verge of tears. This was worse than the homemade flashlight. At least no one laughed then, they just snickered.**

T: Is he feeling good or bad right here, that he volunteered?

Kamel: Bad.

Zeina: Bad.

T: Why?

Kamel: Be, because, eh, his flashlight wasn't working.

T: Now that's an important part where this part's a little confusing. He's remembering the flashlight for a second, but he's saying this was worse than the flashlight, so he's, the flashlight's over. That was first grade. What's worse than the flashlight? What's happened here?

Zeina: The record because it was stuck and it kept on putting, uh, saying the same thing all over and over again.

T: Right. And then so right after that happened, he, Mr. Roybal shuts it off and he's standing there on stage.

A similar troublesome passage exists in *Marven of the Great North Woods*, when the title character is comparing his experience skiing in his new home in the Great North Woods to his experience skiing back home. The students need to answer how Marven is feeling in the segment, but his feelings are revealed through a juxtaposition to a different experience (Marven, Day 3):

T: Yes. So the snow turns sooty, as soon as it fell in this place. It's not even beautiful for a day. Like, here (gestures outside the school windows), it'll be beautiful, and then after a day, it gets all yucky. Here, he's saying, as soon as it falls through the smoky yuckiness, it's all sooty. So how's he feeling, right [now when he's remembering Duluth?]

Rayanne: [He's, he, he, he's] feeling disgusted... by the, um, the black stuff and the, when it comes out of the chimney.

T: Yeah.

Mustafa: But, [wait, wait, is he] =

Rayanne: [inaudible]

Mustafa: = talking about his city or is he talking about the woods?

T: Oh, Mustafa's really being clever here cuz this is a tricky one. Right now he's on his skis in a wonderful place, and he's remembering, the yucky place.

Mustafa: Oh, so,

T: So, [how would he feel?]

Rayanne: [Ohh,] I thought it was the woods.

T: He is in the woods. (reading text segment) **He glided forward [his] =**

Rayanne: [No.]

T: = **skis making soft whisking sounds. This certainly was different.**

Rayanne: I know, I thought he was thinking [about the woods.]

Mustafa: [Yeah, the, the, the] [black]

T: [Oh no, he] was thinking about his home. His home's all crowded, smoky, yucky. Now he's in the beautiful woods. How would you feel if everywhere you skied, has been ugly, yucky, black, [inaudible] =

Mustafa: [Like, disgusted.]

T: = and now, you're in the woods and it's beautiful. [How do you think he feels?]

Mustafa: [Disgus-, so he's-,] so one of them is he's, um, mesmerized, [for the woods]

T: [Yeah.]

Temporal confusion can also happen in straightforward text passages when a lot of different action happens within the same setting, which can require a sequencing of the events to locate the text segment of interest, as I did here with Dimah (McBroom, Day 3):

T: So let's see here. What is McBroom doing? (reading text segment) **Didn't I streak along, though! I was making better time than the young'uns. I kept my hands on the plow handles and steered around barns and farmhouses. I plowed right along and gained rapidly on the young'uns. They were still holding hands and just clearing the tear, tree tops. Before long I was within hailing distance.**

Dimah: So

T: You have (reading record sheet) McBroom is trying to pull the kids and he kept his hands... (trails off) Now. They're not on a string yet. Kay? They're blowing ahead of him. And he's riding the plow. So he-, he's not pulling them yet. They don't have the rope yet... So what's he doing? Remember the kids take off and he says to his wife, Don't [worry]

Dimah: [He's,] he's trying, he, he's, um... he's try, he's *inaudible*, he's on the thing, he's trying to go ahead of the kids so he can, he can throw the rope at them and then bring them?

T: Right. So he's trying to catch up, to the kids, right? [He's trying to catch up to them.]

In fact, this segment of McBroom proved to be a chronic challenge with regards to the need to orient students to their text segments' location in the chain of events. However, as I stated in Chapter 4, segmenting this battle between McBroom and the wind draws attention to the *shifting* power dynamics, which is an important part of the story. But tracking these dynamics requires students to orient themselves to how their segment fits with nearby segments and to target their specific segment to assign power to one participant or another. I helped Ahlam and Kamel do that for their slice of the action with orienting moves (McBroom, Day 3):

Ahlam: I think they're both powerful.

T: Okay.

Ahlam: Because...

T: Tell, tell me why. Cuz I think I know what you might be thinking.

Ahlam: Because the wind was helping him catch up to the k-, to his young'uns, and then, he was, he was using the plow to catch up to his young'uns, to get *inaudible*.

T: So remember, we have to think about, what does McBroom or his family want? In this moment.

Ahlam: The kids.

T: He wants the kids. Is the wind helping him or hurting him from getting his kids.

Ahlam: Helping him.

T: Yeah. So in this moment, who's more powerful?

Ahlam: The wind.

T: No, no. Because, McBroom's getting what he wants, right?

Kamel: McBroom.

T: McBroom is more powerful because he is using ... the wind

Ahlam: To get to his, his kids.

T: To get his kids. Now, you guys, this is tricky because right before, the wind is more powerful because it, takes his kids. And he certainly doesn't want that. And right after, you guys already did this segment, why is the wind more powerful? How does it keep him from getting what he wants? Right after this part. He's catching up to his kids and then what happens.

Zaharaa: The wind keep, the wind is pushing him back.

T: Yeah, when he's pulling his kids. And also before that it pulls, pushes him too fast, remember? But right in this moment, the wind is doing exactly what he wants it to do. So McBroom is more powerful, okay? Does that make sense?... How should we put it, Kamel? McBroom is more powerful because

Kamel: McBroom is more powerful because the wind is helping him catch up to his kids.

T: Perfect! Good job, Kamel.

Orienting moves help students keep their focal segment positioned accurately within the larger text. Sometimes, certain texts require more orienting support because they have temporal-spatial shifts that create references to a distinct event within the assigned segment. Sometimes, continuously orienting text segments with others is imperative to understanding the “big idea,” such as when an oscillating shift of power or feelings is occurring. Further, we can view orienting moves as efforts to model or highlight the behaviors of strong readers for students who need to practice this habit of mind.

### **Prompting for Evidence**

The units were designed to guide students toward grappling with a “big idea,” articulated in the persuasive prompt. The record sheets supported this by using that question or a related question, requiring students to take positions about their segments and support their answers. However, students often copied text verbatim in their answers and verbally cited text verbatim without explaining why that text supported their positions. Alternatively, many times they offered reasoning based on inferences they had made, which needed to be more clearly articulated and/or connected to the text. Finally, sometimes students ignored major pieces of evidence and came up with incorrect or incomplete answers for their segments.

I called my moves to help students successfully support their positions “prompting for evidence.” I frequently did this after reading their written responses on the record sheets. Whether the general answers were right, wrong, or ambiguous, attempts to find evidence and explain it would bring to light the accuracy of the response.

My prompting moves were attempts to resolve this problem. My questions would help them construct the elaboration that connected their position, the text, and their reasoning, making thought processes explicit for themselves and their partner(s). The process of constructing these small arguments is not unidirectional, so my moves vary in what precisely they are asking for. Sometimes, students offered me text and I prompted them for inferences about that text. Sometimes, they offered me inferences and I prompted them for the text segments they were drawing on to make these inferences. Sometimes, students offered me both language from the text and inferences, but needed some prompting to connect these pieces explicitly or to lead them to a position.

The latter can be illustrated by an example that I foreshadowed above. I prompted Zeina and Kamel to be more explicit in their writing about the connection between the text sentence “Everyone was just sitting there” and what they were inferring about Manuel’s emotional state (La Bamba, Day 2):

T: Okay, so he feels bad about volunteering because. Now let's get at what you were saying at. (reads record sheet) Everyone's just sitting there.

Zeina: Getting bored.

T: He feels like, what did you say, Kamel, about his talent?

Kamel: His he feel like his talent is, like, boring, and not really that good.

T: You guys exactly got it. Exactly. So, it's not just that people are sitting there. Cuz right now, there's people just sitting there. (gestures at classroom) I don't feel bad. But they're not, I'm not supposed to entertain them, right? So he feels bad that people are just sitting there, bored, and that his talent isn't entertaining to them. Right? So you guys got it. So figure out how you wanna say that.

In another example, students answered with verbatim text serving as evidence. I prompted them to explain more about what a few particular phrases in the text mean and why they are important to Manuel (La Bamba, Day 2):

Farrah: He was enjoying the limelight.

T: Yeah so he was feeling good about volunteering. What does that mean enjoying the limelight? [How does he feel?]

Riad: [Happy, happy that everyone's knows him now.]

Farrah: [He's excited.]

T: Yeah. Did we talk in our group about that word famous?

Farrah: Yeah.

T: Like he feels famous, right? Like everybody's paying attention to him. Now who's paying attention to him?

Farrah: Like, uh

Riad: The, um, popular kids. And the, um, the d-, the new, I forget, he didn't, um

Farrah: The kids that are popular and the dad?

T: And the teacher. Yeah, [it doesn't talk about his dad yet.]

Riad: [And Ricar, and Ricardo,] the editor of

T: Oh, yeah, if you read on Ricardo asks him about it. Yeah. Now why does it matter that it's the popular kids?

Farrah: Because, like, the limelight was on him.

T: Yeah. Like, what, so what's popular mean?

Riad: Like, he's

Farrah: Kinda like famous.

Riad: Yeah, they're, like everybody knows him.

T: Yeah, so the kids that are like

- Riad: But they prob, probably wouldn't, won't be friends with him, because the famous people won't be friends, the popular won't be friends with, like, the normal people.
- T: Right. So if they're all paying attention to him then he feels like he's [cool. He's famous. He's popular.]
- Riad: [Kin-  
da popular *inaudible*.]
- T: Right. So you guys are good, you had it good. I just want you to say it's more, it's more than, don't just write that he was enjoying the limelight but talk about that idea, like he was, he had all this attention from important people.

Because of their tendency to quote verbatim text, sometimes prompting for evidence meant supporting students as they synthesized multiple facts from the text into a pithy idea that worked for the written answer. When Ali, Riad, and Zeina were listing the multiple threatening actions of the wind to support their assertion that it was more powerful, I interrupted to prompt them to synthesize these ideas into a whole concept (McBroom, Day 3):

- T: Wait a minute, pause for a second. You guys are doing great. But right here, is a good case where, instead of listing all the things it does, we can just think about the big idea of this moment.
- Riad: The house, and just, [shaking the house.]
- T: [So, they're outside], wind comes. What do they do?
- Riad: He calls in all his [children.]
- T: (imitating McBroom) [Come on, guys.] Come on, come on. Then they're in the house and what's happening around them?
- Riad: I'm the one who read all these *inaudible* (*referring to children's name list*).
- T: Right.
- Riad: It's very [*inaudible*]



T: [Then] they're in the house, and then what's happening around them, Zeina, [in the house?]

Zeina: [It's] shaking?

T: Shaking the house. So imagine you're that family. What are you thinking right then? What are you feeling?

Ali: Be so scared.

T: Yes. So who's more powerful?

Ali: [The wind.]

Riad: [The wind.]

T: Why?

Ali: Because they're all getting so scared.

T: Yeah. They're [scared.]

Riad: [The] house is shaking, they don't know what's coming.

T: Yeah. And you can list all that. I mean, that would be correct. But, the big idea, and easier than writing all that is to say it's scaring them. [It scared them into the house.]

Riad: [So, cross everything out?]

T: That it scared them even in the house.

Riad: So cross the things we wrote.

T: I mean, it's up to you, but I would. I would say the wind is more powerful because it...

Ali: It got them all scared.

T: Yeah. So I think you can cross off all this and just say it got them all scared... The wind is more powerful because it got them all scared... You are so good at that, Ali.

Similar to citing specific text language, students would cite specific occurrences in the story and need me to prompt them to think about the importance of that event with respect to the “big idea.” After the McBroom girls used the wind to help them efficiently complete a distasteful chore—plucking the Thanksgiving turkey—I wanted students to see that it is the use of the strength of the wind for their own desired ends, not the wind’s strength in and of itself, that is support for the girls’ power position in this segment (McBroom, Day 3):

- T: Yeah. I love how you said they used the wind. Now, I just wanna make one suggestion. It's not specifically just about the turkey. It says they didn't much like that chore. So they're using the wind [to]
- Riad: [To] help them.
- Ali: [To help them]
- T: [To help them] get  
out of
- Ali: The chore.
- T: Yeah, to get out of the chore, get out of work, okay? So you can write about the turkey, but I think the bigger point is, the girls are more powerful because they're using the wind to
- Riad: [Help them.]
- Ali: [Help them.]
- Riad: [Help them on their chores?]
- Zeina: [Help them pluck feathers out of the turkey.]
- T: Yes. Exactly.
- Riad: (returning to writing) The girls are more powerful because...
- Ali: The wind is helping them for their [chores.]

This work became more challenging during the third unit—*The New Doctor*—because students had to infer what Dr. Johnson was thinking; the author doesn’t tell us explicitly what

she thinks. In situations where the students struggled to even take a position, the prompting for evidence became part of the process of taking a position, as seen here when Farrah and Alyssa were totally stumped about what Dr. Johnson was thinking (Doctor, Day 3):

T: So what does she think? Why, why... Why doesn't she want a curandera? What does that show us about what she thinks?

Farrah: [Be-]

Alyssa: [What] is a curandera?

Farrah: I- =

T: It's a healer.

Farrah: =A he-

Alyssa: Ohh.

Farrah: Because, like, she thi-, she thinks a curandera doesn't, like, i-, it's like, she doesn't do, right.

T: Yeah. If she's saying "I could use help," but is still saying no way to a curandera, it's because she thinks a curandera, what, [Farrah?]

Farrah: [Is not,] (stutters), it doesn't, like, it's not really a healer. She's not good.

T: [She's not good.]

Alyssa: [Oh, oh,] it's witchcraft?

T: Yeah, you could say that. She thi-, Dr. Johnson thinks, um, a curandera is not good, practices witchcraft, whatever you want to say.

Another challenge occurred when evidence for multiple ideas was complexly interwoven. Sometimes, students took a position and supported it with evidence, but there was further evidence in the assigned text segment that could have been used to counter that position or support an additional position. One segment in *The New Doctor* resulted in Daniyah's assertion that Dr. Johnson thinks she can meet all the medical needs of the village, which she supported

with the text. But there was more embedded in this segment—evidence for another idea Dr. Johnson thinks about—that I was able to slowly elicit from the group (Doctor, Day 3):

T: Now hold on. You're right. "I'm looking forward to being your friend." That's just one part of what she says. Think about all the rest. (reading text segment) **I'll have a lot of advantages to share with you, Dr. Johnson said. You won't have to travel all the way to Albuquerque when you are sick, or rely on home remedies you make yourself, that don't work most of the time. I'm looking forward to bringing [all of that] =**

Daniyah: [Ohh.]

T: = to you.  
What else does Dr. Johnson [think?]

Daniyah: [She's saying,] like, you could come to me for whatever you need.

T: Mmm. Yeah, she thinks she, okay, so she thinks she can, um... Yeah, you're right cuz she says she doesn't have to move to, er, go to Alburquerque, so she thinks she meet their needs, right?

Daniyah: Yeah.

T: What about this part. "Or rely on home remedies you make yourself [that don't work] =

Daniyah: [You could]

T: = most of the time."

Daniyah: You can, she's saying you could, uh, come to her whenever sh-, you need it, and, um, you could get the medicine from her.

T: Yeah, that's sort of what you already said, that she could meet her needs. Asil, what does this mean when she says, "You don't have to rely on home remedies you make yourself that don't work most of the time"?

Asil: Uh, like, um, you don't have to make your own medicine.

T: Yeah, or home remedies, we also talked about, is, like, um... the medicine you make yourself, or even stuff you don't even make like, like, we were talking about soup or, putting, maybe, olive oil in your ear or something. What about this part, "that don't work most of the time."

Daniyah: She's saying, she's saying, like, [it]

T: [What doesn't,] hold on, let me talk to Asil for a second. Asil, "or rely on home remedies you make yourself that don't work most of the time." What don't work? What's she saying don't work?

Asil: Um, like, when you make your own medicine and you put it on your ear.

T: Yeah. Does Manuelita think those things work?

Asil: (Asil shakes her head, no, but...) Yeah.

Daniyah: Yeah, she [thinks they work.]

T: [Does Lupe] think those things work?

Daniyah: Yeah.

Asil: Yeah.

T: Does Dr. Johnson think those things work?

Daniyah: [No.]

Asil: [(shakes her head to indicate no)]

T: So what do her words tell us about what she's thinking?

Daniyah: (writes) She...

T: I think it's important what you said too, she thinks she can meet all of their [needs,] =

Daniyah: [*inaudible*]

T: = but also what she thinks about

Daniyah: *inaudible*

T: Home remedies...

A similar discussion occurred when Kamel and Alyssa were analyzing the last lines of *Marven of the Great North Woods* and were focusing only on the relief over there being no grizzly, failing

to notice the author's powerful imagery that showed Marven was making a home for himself in this strange place. I had to use evidence to prompt them to take an additional position on

Marven's feelings (Marven, Day 2):

T: So, this is the very end of the story. And, um... so that grizzly stuff has already happened. And now the lumberjacks are coming back through the woods, they're singing this nice song, Marven and Jean Louis start skiing with them and Marven starts humming with them. (reading record sheet) Marven feels, what's this word?

Alyssa: Excited.

T: [Excited]

Kamel: [Excited] and relieved.

T: Because he found out there was no grizzly. That's good. I think he also feels something else. This is perfect, but I would add... How bout this part where the, all the lumberjacks are coming, and it says at the end, "he hummed the tune they were singing." So he's skiing with them and humming with them. How's he feeling right now, do you think?

Kamel: Eh, happy.<586206>

T: Yeah. Why?

Kamel: Excited...

T: What kind of happy? That's, that's what all these words are about. There's different kinds of happy. What, why, tell me why you feel happy first, and then we can figure out the right word.

Kamel: Eh, like, eh... was happy... like excited because, eh, he, there was no grizzly and he's, eh

T: (to another group) Just one second, guys, and I'll check it.

Kamel: He's, eh, going, he feels safe, like, he feels safe.

T: Safe is one of our words up there. He feels safe why, Kamel?

Kamel: Safe because he's, eh, humming a tune with a big lumberjacks with axes.

- T: Yeah, but listen, Kamel. A few pages before he was terrified of the lumberjacks. When he was around them he did not feel safe, right? He felt intimidated, he felt like, they're huge. They might get mad at me if I wake them up." Why does he feel safe now?
- Kamel: Because, eh, he knows them, eh, and, eh, he, uh, eh, uh, like
- T: Why do you think he knows them now? He hasn't talked to any of them but Jean Louis. What did Jean Louis do that would help him feel safe now?
- Kamel: Jean Louis... eh... eh, he... there, he, uh, was actually the big grizzly, and, eh, that made him happy so there was no grizzly.
- T: What if he had seen Jean Louis, and saw that is wasn't a grizzly, and Jean Louis had said, "Raar! Get outta here, kid!" Would he be feeling safe right now [still?]
- Kamel: [No.]
- T: No, he'd still be scared of the, of the lumberjacks... What did Jean Louis do, that helped him now feel safe with all of them?
- Alyssa: Di-, he gave him a hug?
- T: Yeah, he, like, well, I don-, I don't remem-, remember he's crying, and Jean Louis takes his thumb and rubs his tears away. So what would you call that?
- Alyssa: At home? [He feeling at home?]
- T: [What's Jean Louis] doing? He's crying and he's saying, "Oh, mon petit. Oh, you miss your mama?" What do you call what Jean Louis is doing?
- Alyssa: Caring?
- T: Yeah. Cuz Je-, so he feels safe because Jean Louis?
- Alyssa: Cares about him?
- T: Cares for him, yeah.

Prompting for evidence was a key teacher move in this work because the entire units were structured to support students in taking positions on the text and supporting the positions

with textual evidence and inference, first verbally during the text-based discussion, then in writing for their essays. The moves I made were intended to help students construct small arguments that could lead them into discussion of the larger arguments. For example, developing an argument that Dr. Johnson thinks a particular thing during a particular segment could serve as evidence for the larger question about whether she will ultimately stay closed-minded or become open-minded about traditional medicine. Similarly, developing an argument that Manuel feels good or bad about his experience during a particular segment could serve as evidence for the larger question about whether he will volunteer in next year's show.

The moves I made were in service of looking for three pieces in these mini-arguments: a clear position or set of positions, text citations that supported these positions, and explanations about how the text citation connected to the position, which often involved articulating an inference about the text. These three pieces were solicited in targeted ways when one element was clearly missing or erroneous, and in tandem with each other, when segments were particularly complex or students were particularly struggling. These moves were the thrust of the work, as the intent of the TBDs were to co-construct high-quality arguments concerned with the text's "big idea."

### **Summary and Discussion of Results**

The research questions ask, "How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?" and "What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?" The results in this chapter describe some challenges of the pair/threesome participation structure and some teacher moves that can assist



students in this setting. Here I summarize these results and discuss what they mean for the research questions.

### **Pair/Threesome Work**

Students did not work productively in pairs/threesomes. Instead of this participation structure fostering talk about the text, students often sat in silence or were off-task. When they were focused on the work, they tended to neglect discussion as part of the process, instead rushing to identify “right” answers and fill them in quickly. Additionally, the writing component of the work took up a lot of time that could have been spent on discussion.

My observation of this lack of productive student behavior during the pair/threesome work was disappointing; however, these are not unusual problems when students are asked to think and talk about text. Even though the students appeared to be working as I circulated, my closer look through the video revealed a different picture. Nystrand and Gamoran (1991) explain this dissonance when they distinguish between behavior that goes through the motions of schooling versus intellectually stimulating engagement. They assert that, “Occasionally [students] become genuinely engaged in academic problems and issues, but for most students, this kind of engagement is rare” (p. 262). Even when teachers structure contexts for discussion, garnering student engagement is challenging. Referring to their work on TBDs, Sandora, Beck, and McKeown (1999) comment that they “often heard teachers with whom [they] interacted express difficulty in getting discussions going, particularly in getting students to respond in thoughtful and meaningful ways to questions about texts they read” (p. 181). These findings serve as a reminder to teachers and curriculum developers that this is challenging instructional work, and we cannot assume “all is well” when we don’t have eyes and ears on the students.

The silence and off-task behavior have different plausible causes. Perhaps the students were uncomfortable with their particular partners. The fact that the behavior was consistent across all pairs/threesomes, however, and that it stayed consistent across units in which the partnerships varied, suggests that something else was going on.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the students were not accustomed to this kind of participation structure. In their study of ELLs' interactional behavior in different classroom contexts, Arreaga-Mayer and Perdomo-Rivera (1996) found that students worked in small groups for only 2% of the day, despite empirical support for this participation structure's success in supporting language development and academic gains. Similarly, the students' "worksheet" approach to the work is likely rooted in the prevalent "worksheet" approach to schooling that makes discursive participation structures rarities in classrooms. Arreaga-Mayer and Perdomo-Rivera's (1996) study also found that seatwork made up 32% of students' school days. This helps to explain why I observed the students looking back into the text in a search for exact wording they could copy into the blank space on their record sheets, with little or no discussion of why that text was helpful. They were adept at this and it appeared to be a task they were used to doing. I suspect the focus on being "right" is likely rooted in this idea too, as students often get their answers on worksheets marked as correct or incorrect, without discussion. These two preoccupations—with speed and "right-ness"—were indicative of students focusing on being done with a task rather than learning from a task. In scholastic settings where worksheets and multiple-choice tests are ubiquitous, it is not surprising that students might approach all school work with a focus on finishing tasks quickly and correctly.

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<sup>44</sup> Students expressed pleasure when they were assigned to partner with someone from their class and/or someone of the same gender. These factors may also have been at play.

Another possibility is that the task was too difficult. Although the work was not procedurally complicated, the questions that students needed to contemplate were complex, and they may not have been used to this. Reading instruction for struggling readers has been consistently shown to focus on low-level skill-and-drill types of questions instead of complex analysis of the text (Allington, 1983; Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001; Palincsar & David, 1991; Raphael & Au, 2005). Instead of engaging, students found strategies for getting around group discussions that I had intended to foster with challenging work. These different off-task behaviors fit into a theory developed by Hansen (1989) after a research team followed eight groups of bilingual students through three years of elementary school, amassing 1,600 hours of classroom observations and 300 hours of video footage. According to Hansen, students protect their egos in the classroom when engaged in boring or confusing tasks, which he calls “defending.” His data show that this was done in one of two ways when students were confused by an activity. In the first way, students defended:

by appearing to ignore the assignment, as if they assumed that the confusion would be resolved without their effort or that their lack of participation would be ignored or forgiven. Unlike those who rejected, however, they continued to monitor the activity and adjusted their behavior to that of the teacher. (p. 188)

This behavior matches some of what I saw on the videotapes when students would be off-task but repeatedly prompt others to finish the work. What I noticed as the circulating teacher however, appeared different, which is why the results surprised me when I began the transcription. Hansen corroborates this perception, though: “Far more frequently, however, we observed the children in these eight elementary classrooms respond to ill-understood or overly demanding assignments not by evading them but rather by looking busy and giving the appearance of actively engaging them” (p. 189). This theory explains why I saw students who looked busy from afar, but who actually were off-task, as well as students who had withdrawn

their participation, but knew how the partnership was progressing (or failing to progress) with the task.

The written component of the tasks merits a closer look as well, when we consider the ways the challenging nature of the work may have discouraged the desired participation. The unproductive behavior rooted in this part of the task was especially pernicious. Writing conventions disrupted thinking about the content in several ways. Students spent a lot of time discussing who should write, spelling, and the tidiness of the writing instead of discussing the text. More disturbingly, there was evidence that worry about spelling actually constrained thought processes because students felt intimidated about writing complex words and thoughts. There were also explicit student statements equating the role of writer with the role of thinker, which undermines the co-construction of meaning that the pair/threesome participation structure was intended to foster. These findings aren't surprising or unique. The 2011 NAEP report on eighth-grade student writing states that only 27% of students perform at or above the Proficient level (NAEP, 2011). In one example of researchers attempting to address such discouraging statistics, Englert, Zhao, Dunsmore, Collings, and Wolbers (2007) designed and tested a computer-based scaffolding program for students with learning disabilities. One of the writing challenges they discussed facing was “a lack of automaticity in basic skills (grammar, punctuation, writing fluency, word retrieval)” (p. 10). In another example, Dunn and Finley (2010) describe their work guiding young writers through the writing process. They present a scenario reminiscent of the transcript excerpts in this study:

At one session, I suggested that she write about her favorite television program. In trying to compose the text, Sally spent so much of her mental energy trying to spell the words that she had little energy left to devote to idea progression and story structure (p. 33).

Dunn and Finley note the cognitive challenges involved in these writing tasks—“The brain’s memory and motor functions must work in tandem to help the student define the words to be written in a logical order, with correct spelling, and to convey the intended meaning and ideas” (p. 33)—and other empirical research further contextualizes the writing struggles of the students in this study when we consider the correlation between ELL status and vocabulary development and academic language (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Carlo, et al., 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004), as well as SES status and vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Therefore, the writing component of the task presented challenges that raise several dilemmas. The writing was necessary for holding students accountable and for disseminating work on different segments of the story. I attempted to mitigate problems it could create by stressing to students that spelling and conventions were not priorities; I was far more interested in their ideas. However, it appears that entrenched ideas about the nature of school work and the nature of intellectual responsibility were stubborn obstacles that made the writing component, as it was here, detrimental to the work. Considerations of how much writing to include in the task are tricky because there is academic value in asking students to write their own answers, and their difficulty articulating answers was a context for me to hear their thinking and push them for more. That said, we sacrificed a lot of discursive efficiency. This was especially problematic with struggling writers who needed nearly every word spelled out for them. We want all students to take on the different roles, so these students need to take their turn at this component of the task; and yet we want the work to happen with a certain amount of “flow.” This idea of efficiency is not just about getting the work completed, but about preserving the time to spend on content and discussion, not tediously spelling word after word. A counter-example provokes

more thought about these dilemmas. In the *Toto* unit, students didn't write, but rather placed cards with the segments written on them into appropriate columns. During this unit, students spoke to each other about the task sooner, which was beneficial, but they spoke for less time, since the task was more easily "completed." In this case, I wonder whether removing the writing component exacerbated the "worksheet" problems, or opened up time I could have used to foster more talk in either pairs/threesomes or whole-group contexts.

Clearly, there are many complex challenges to address with respect to the pair/threesome participation structure. Whether the causes were social, normative, or academic, the silence and off-task behavior were problematic and pervasive. Whether the students were missing the point of the task or were daunted by the task, they did not engage in discussion with their partners. These findings show that this tendency is so pervasive that it is not easily overcome by teacher modeling and explicitly-stated expectations for thinking and discussion.

The irony in these results is that the participation structure was intended to scaffold students' discussion of the text, particularly for ELLs who may need practice with the oral language and academic language of the task before contributing to a larger group discussion. The participation structure itself, however, needed more scaffolding for students to be able to interact within it. I realize that I made an assumption that the participation structure would work as intended, and didn't see it as something requiring its own instruction. These findings, however, indicate that forming small groups of students, giving them a common task, and telling them to talk to each other about the work is not enough to ensure that students will do so.

Furthermore, we saw evidence that off-task students could influence the behavior of other students; therefore, we cannot depend on the more conscientious students to do this work for us. In fact, McMahon and Goatley (1992) studied the influence that students familiar with Book

Club would have on students new to the TBD. They were especially interested in how student support for each other could make the implementation of discursive formats more practical for teachers. They observed a group of five students in September who had a range of Book Club experience and ability. The observations took place on three separate discussion days over one month. The results show that even in student-led discussions, IRE<sup>45</sup> dominates. McMahon and Goatley argue that the IRE tradition can cause students to act as “passive observers” that contribute their thinking “only when called upon” (McMahon & Goatley, 1995, p. 32). They find this problematic because it limits students’ opportunities to participate and does not facilitate students taking responsibility for the conversation. They root this in Bakhtin notion that people construct ideas in social contexts, proposing that being this passive is not social enough.

To address these problems, we need to help students have different mindsets about the work. We need to help them see discussion as a resource, so that when they feel stuck they don’t sit in silence or wait for the teacher. We need them to see writing as a means for expressing their ideas to the group, not as spelling or handwriting assessments. We need them to see that they are all responsible for thinking about the work, regardless of who holds the marker. The students in this study needed such help, likely because they weren’t familiar with the format or task. Matsumara, Garnier, and Spybrook (2012) cite Applebee and colleagues (Applebee, et al., 2003, as cited in Matsumura, Garnier, & Sprbrook, 2012) who state that “Research indicates... that discussions that encourage active participation and meaning making on the part of students rarely occur in classrooms (Applebee, et al., 2003, p. 36).” It is worrisome that the way this task was structured may have reinforced students’ problematic ideas about scholarly work and the nature of text, thought, and writing in relationship.

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<sup>45</sup> A classroom discourse pattern consisting of an initiation act (I), a response act (R) and an evaluation act (E) (Cazden, 1988)

To achieve this altered mindset, we also need to teach students more explicitly about how to engage in this participation structure. After months of work, Goatley and Raphael (1992) found some progress in certain aspects of students' participation in Book Club, but persistent challenges in others. They concluded, as I do, that "the instruction that promoted students' growth required that the teacher assume a role beyond that of manager of a particular instructional system or transmitter of information characteristic of instructional models based in behaviorism or information processing" (p. 321). Although I thought a lot during planning about how to scaffold the content of the task, I did not put that same degree of thought into scaffolding participation. This led to some major oversights. For instance, my "modeling" showed me doing the work individually, not with another person; thus, I modeled the content and general procedure, but not the participatory behavior. What would scaffolding the participatory behavior look like?

Some researchers have given these ideas more attention in their intervention designs. The researchers who work with Collaborative Strategic Reasoning (CSR; Klingner & Vaughn, 1999; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000; Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998) describe the extensive training the classes in their studies receive in the CSR technique, before being asked to work in peer groups. In their various studies, the researchers or teachers explicitly explain the different aspects of the technique, facilitate student attempts to do it, and use student groups to model the work. Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005) talk about how the teacher refined her plans for literature circles when she saw students struggling "after overwhelming [them] with information, directions and explanations on the first round of literature circles" (p. 106). She used read alouds and minilessons to model the kind of talk and work with the text that she expected. If I had considered steps like these, the pair/threesome work may have looked very different.



It could help to consider Mooney's (1990)<sup>46</sup> "to, with, by" framework for teaching with a gradual release of responsibility model (GRR; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). We can think about how we would show the expected behavior *to* the students, how we would do it *with* the students, and how we would assess them doing it *by* themselves. I definitely skipped over the *to* step, never offering student visions of what the work should look like. I could have done the record sheets with some students, allowing others to watch in a "fishbowl" activity. In such an activity, we could have named the discursive moves and kinds of talk that are productive. Michaels, O'Conner, and Resnick's (2008) "accountable talk" is an example of ways to name and cue the discourse moves students need to make. These "accountable talk" moves could apply to this context, and/or other moves could be developed. If I were using this in my permanent classroom, I would also consider taping students engaged in this work and viewing the video as a class to discuss productive and unproductive participatory behaviors and to identify patterns in how productive talk flows throughout the task.

I somewhat addressed the *with* step when I circulated to support students. I complimented productive contributions and corrected some off-task behaviors. But if I really wanted to teach the participation structure well, I would need to be more explicit about naming the participatory behaviors and cuing the desired ones when they were missing. (This would be facilitated by the more robust *to* component just described.) If I were using this in my permanent classroom, paraprofessionals and/or classroom aides would be another resource for the *with* step, if they were properly trained in the participation structure and could offer similar feedback to groups. Another option would be the use of discursive heuristics or assigned roles, which provide some structure for students to know what is expected of them in any given moment. The

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<sup>46</sup> Mooney's framework was introduced to me during my pre-service training by Dr. Catherine Reischl in a literacy methods course.

foundational work of Palincsar and Brown (1984) developed such scaffolds for struggling readers engaged in small group discussions of text. Additionally, Dugan (1997) developed such a heuristic for transactional approaches to literature discussions; the RQL2 heuristic helps students remember to respond, question, listen, and link.

The *by* step is key to any true scaffolding because eventually it has to fade away so students can do the work independently (Palincsar, 1998). Doing this would require observing students without intervening, or possibly even videotaping to get a “fly on the wall” assessment of their participatory behavior. Information gathered during such assessments could inform the subsequent instruction on the participation structure.

In summary, the pair/threesome work presented a conundrum for practice: the very scaffold we are using to foster discussion—the participation structure—requires its own set of scaffolds. When using an unusual approach in the classroom, we can’t neglect that students need support to learn new behaviors. With respect to the FGA pedagogy, we need to acknowledge that in many classroom settings, the pair/threesome participation structure is unusual and will require its own initial and ongoing cycle of instruction and assessment.

### **Teacher Moves**

In spite of the productivity problems, the pairs/threesomes produced high-quality work that provided grist for the TBD. Three teacher moves I made when circulating from group to group helped them with this work. “Targeting” helped them focus on the text segment they were responsible for analyzing. “Orienting” helped them be mindful of where the segment fell within the larger narrative. “Prompting for evidence” helped them explicitly articulate the connections between their positions and the textual evidence or inferences they were using to support the position. I am not asserting that these are the only moves or most important moves that I made.

Almasi, McKeown, and Beck (1996) characterize valuable teacher moves that I can also identify in this study's transcripts:

[S]tudents and teachers become cognitively engaged as various interpretive tools are used to construct meaningful interpretations of text. We viewed interpretive tools as strategies in their individual interactions with text as they attempt to make sense of it or as they craft their interpretations. The types (or categories) of interpretive tools that were used consistently by students and teachers in both classrooms included (a) relating the content of the text to personal experiences, movies, or other books; (b) using the text, including features such as titles or illustrations, to support ideas or verify or reject earlier predictions; and (c) piecing information together about aspects of the text such as character motives, character actions, or text events. (pp. 118-119)

However, I do think that due to students' focus on very specific segments of the text, I made use of the targeting, orienting, and prompting moves in tandem with other moves to help students concentrate on their assigned pieces of the text, which is key to FGA. Commeyras (Commeyras, Pearson, Ennis, García, & Anderson, 1992) describes her efforts to scaffold student work with text and itemizes teaching moves similar to mine; she stimulated student involvement, encouraged students to go back into the text, provided clarification, and acted as a participant.

This is an important element of the enactment because student success with my presence juxtaposed against the findings above that describe their unproductive independent behavior suggests that perhaps the task itself was within most students' zones of proximal development (ZPD) and my presence served as the needed scaffold (Vygotsky & Rieber, 1998; Vygotsky, 1965). Vygotsky characterized teaching as a more knowledgeable other guiding the physical and intellectual work of the learner. This is done most successfully when the work is within the learner's ZPD, meaning that the task is not so difficult as to cause frustration, nor so easy as to limit the work to what the student can already do independently. To help a learner perform within his ZPD, a challenging task can be made easier for the learner through the use of scaffolds that support his attempts. The task does not change, but rather the student's expected role in the

task is mindfully adjusted (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). As the student improves, these scaffolds fall away or “fade” and new scaffolds are metaphorically erected for the next learning stage. In these units, the structure of the record sheets, the modeling, and the sentence starters were all intended to scaffold the work, but it appears students needed more, and my presence and specific moves were the needed scaffolds.

Teacher moves and questions about how they shape student talk and thought have long been the subject of intense study, such as Cazden’s (1988) description and critique of typical classroom discourse and Tharp and Gallimore’s (1988) vision of a more discursive classroom life for students. Many TBD designs sprang from this foundational research and have similarly juxtaposed how classrooms sound, how they could/should sound, and what teachers need to do to foster these changes. Additionally, Nystrand and Gamoran (1991) studied instruction that appeared to lead to student engagement and found that teachers asking authentic questions, incorporating student responses into subsequent questions, and incorporating student responses into subsequent discussion all fostered student engagement. McNeil (2012) looked at how teacher talk created dialogic space within ELLs’ zones of proximal development in order to answer referential questions.

My moves appeared to foster student engagement. Reninger’s (2007) dissertation study found that teachers and students coming together as “problem-solvers” promoted literacy skills in struggling readers, and I feel that was my role in the pairs/threesomes. I helped them approach the task step-by-step, but usually they came up with their own high-quality responses. The problem with my moves acting as scaffolding was that they couldn’t fade; students quickly reverted to undesired behaviors when I walked away.

This further supports the idea that the difficulty of the task may have provoked the

students' unproductive behavior described in the previous section. I do not wish to characterize the pair/threesome work as "too" difficult, however; if we think of the teacher presence as a scaffold that helped them produce high-quality work, perhaps the tasks were ideally suited for learning. When I was not there, however, I suspect students were struggling with the work and thus withdrew from it in ways that Hansen (1989) described.

This idea provokes questions about other ways to provide this scaffolding in a setting where the teachers need to move around from group to group. My first thought is to incorporate the same moves into the modeling portion of instruction by highlighting my targeting of the segment, orienting myself aloud, and verbalizing routine questions that prompt for evidence. This routine could be developed into a posted heuristic as well. Additionally, in some units, highlighted text acted as a built-in targeting reminder. It is also worth noting that in a transcript excerpt cited earlier, Mustafa is the one who first began the orienting talk with his question "Is he talking about his city or is he talking about the woods?" (Marven, Day 2). Mustafa is an "advanced comprehender," according to the formal standardized assessment and my informal experience working with him. Orienting might be a behavior that strong readers do without prompting, and that we need to help struggling readers begin to do, much the way we teach comprehension strategies. Like research on strategy work done in the past, teachers can help make explicit for students the thought processes that strong readers engage in to make sense of text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). When Mustafa asked the orienting question, he was also helping other students begin to think similarly about text.

Although the targeting and orienting moves were somewhat simple, co-constructing arguments with students required careful thought about what students were saying and where I

wanted them to go. The questions I asked them were attempts to elicit the inferences they were making, trace them back to the text's language, and connect them to the position they were taking. We were partners in the problem-solving (Reninger, 2007). Without my prompts, complete responses that contained all of these elements were rare. Rather, students would take a position on the record sheet's question—Manuel felt bad about volunteering, for example—and cite the text, but leave out any elaboration about why this text was supportive of that position (i.e., “Everyone was just sitting there.”). Or they might articulate an inference they had made when reading the text segment, but leave out the text that provoked that inference (i.e., “He doesn't think he's good.”).

It's harder to think of ways to scaffold this move without my presence. Repeatedly engaging in this work is likely to help students improve over time (Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Waggoner, Chinn, & Anderson, 1995). Zhang, Anderson, and Nguyen-Jahiel (2013) have recently shown that participation in this work helps ELLs to improve in the skills necessary for the work, as well as to display more engagement with the task. It is likely that these findings are cyclical in the sense that feeling more capable feeds engagement, and increased engagement further refines the necessary skills for the work. Almasi, McKeown, and Beck (1996) eloquently describe this idea in their own work with TBDs:

What is uniquely understood by this data is that the public use of these interpretive tools by students and teachers seemed to create a context, or classroom culture, that characterized engagement and that also fostered further engagement. We noticed that, as interpretive strategies were modeled or used by the teacher or peer, students became accustomed to seeing them used to derive an interpretation of the text. Therefore, as students and teachers attempted to construct meaningful interpretations, students became cognitively engaged as they used various interpretive tools. That is, there seemed to be an inherent reflexivity in that the use of interpretive tools seemed to be a distinguishing feature of an engaged reader, while at the same time, the use of the tools nurtured the engagement that it constituted. (p. 119)

The “beyond-teacher” scaffolding required here is likely dependent on the particular students, text, and task (RAND, 2002), but these results show that thinking about several layers of support is important. Co-constructing arguments is a complex activity. Supporting the work is equally complex, but relying on the teacher as a scaffold that can’t fade isn’t fully realizing the instructional task. The real teaching work needs to help students learn to do this reading work with each other. Sandora, Beck, and McKeown (1999) point out that across different TBD approaches:

the common focus is to present students with complex literature and then encourage them to consider issues represented in the text or develop solutions to problems that characters faced. Students are expected to articulate their own positions in terms of issues and problems and to find evidence in the text to support their thinking. An important facet is that students work collaboratively with their peers to share and challenge each other’s ideas. (p.180)

In summary, students’ unproductive behaviors in the pair/threesome setting coupled with the fact that they could accomplish the task with my presence implies that the work is within their ZPDs and that we need to think more about non-teacher scaffolds that can help as teachers circulate and that can then fade away themselves. Until students can independently engage in the necessary discussion for completing this complex work, we have to keep supporting them in different, complementary ways.

## CHAPTER 6: WORKING WITH FGA METALANGUAGE

The goal of this teaching experiment was to use Functional Grammar Analysis and its associated pedagogical practices to prepare students for successful text-based discussions. The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” In this chapter, I focus on another aspect of the enactments that is the key element to the FGA pedagogy: the use of FGA metalanguage.

Working with the FGA terminology and associated metalanguage enhanced student engagement with the text and facilitated talk that dealt deeply with the text’s meaning. Using the terminology and metalanguage also presented unique challenges for instruction. Not surprisingly, it helped and challenged in different ways, depending on the specific text and specific metalanguage used.

In this chapter, I describe the ways FGA terminology and metalanguage were featured in each of the five units. These descriptions will explain how the terminology and metalanguage were intended to facilitate student engagement with the text, offer transcript data<sup>47</sup> to support that this engagement was occurring, and note unit-specific challenges that the FGA terminology and metalanguage presented for the work.

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<sup>47</sup> The transcript segments in this chapter are lengthy due to the need to show all the conversation that went into co-constructing many of these meanings.



## La Bamba: The Connector “But”

The text for this unit describes Manuel’s experience participating in a school talent show. As we follow him from his initial volunteering, through the rehearsal and performance, and into his bedroom the night after the show, we see Manuel go through many emotional ups and downs. The “big idea” we focused on for this text was that people can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. The final writing prompt asked students to decide whether or not Manuel would sign up for the talent show again the next year.

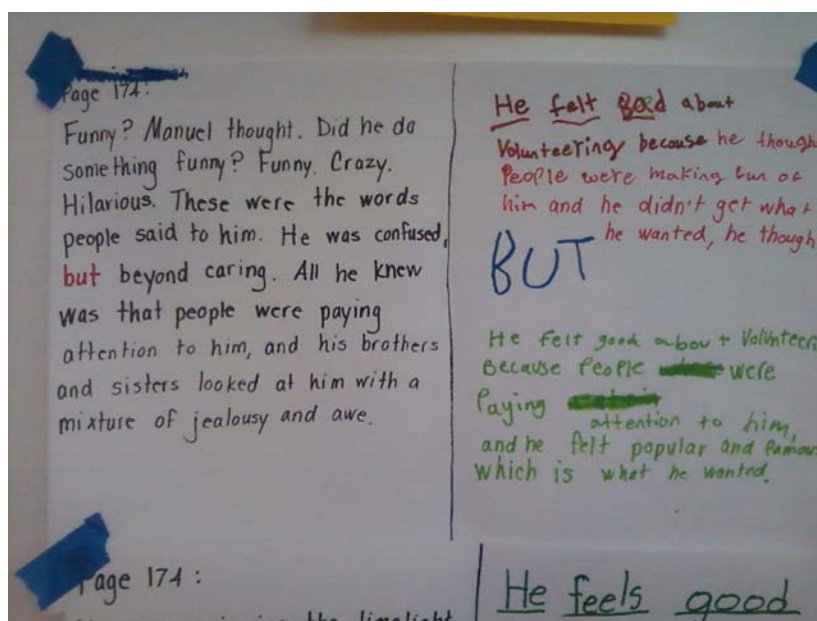
### FGA Metalanguage and the Text’s “Big Idea”

Recall that the author’s use of the *connector* “but” is a useful feature in the *La Bamba* text. In FGA, *connectors* are words that serve to link ideas, and the most frequently used ones are “and” and “but.” For this unit, I discussed these two *connectors* with students, explaining their similarities and differences in that they both connect ideas, but “and” implies likeness or union, and “but” implies difference, exception, or juxtaposition. We went through many example sentences that I made up to illustrate this idea and the students quickly grasped it. Then the students analyzed text segments that contained the *connector* “but.”

On Day 2 I didn’t introduce or use any FGA terminology or metalanguage. During the Day 2 text analysis, students read segments and identified how Manuel felt about volunteering during that segment. On Day 3, I introduced the FGA term *connector* and juxtaposed “and” and “but,” as described above. During the Day 3 text analysis, students did the same sort of analysis—identifying how Manuel felt about volunteering in that moment—with more complex segments that contained conflicting and/or changing feelings in Manuel, signaled by the author’s use of the *connector* “but.” The metalanguage served to remind students to look for a change in Manuel, signaled by the presence of “but.”

The focus on the FGA term *connector* was a way to both scaffold the analysis task and underscore the “big idea.” It served as a scaffold because the word “but” was a concrete divider in the text segments and students looked at the text before and after this divider, knowing that Manuel’s feelings would be different on either side. (In fact, we often talked about how Manuel felt “before the *but*” and “after the *but*.”) More importantly, however, analyzing the use of this *connector* served to underscore the “big idea”—that Manuel had mixed feelings about his talent show experience—by showing the dynamism in the story. It isn’t the case that Manuel has a problem that causes negative feelings, then the problem is resolved and he feels positive about the experience. Rather, throughout the text Manuel feels both excited and nervous, optimistic and pessimistic, regretful and delighted. Analyzing Manuel’s feelings and posting them in a timeline format showcased these juxtapositions. The record sheets showed this analysis of Manuel’s feelings in different segments, some of which articulated a single positive or negative emotional state, but many of which showed the complexity of a single moment (see *Figure 6.1*).

*Figure 6.1 Conflicting feelings within on text segment*



## Evidence of Student Engagement With the Text

During analysis, students discussed vocabulary and author's word choice, co-constructed inferences about character behavior, and make intra-text connections that highlighted themes in the story. In the following transcript excerpt, I helped Daniyah and Adel think deeply about Manuel's feelings about the whole experience when he is getting ready for bed after it is all over.

(La Bamba, Day 3):

T: So let's look before the "but." (reading text segment) **Manuel, feeling happy, went to his bedroom, undressed, and slipped into his pajamas. He looked in the mirror and began to pantomime La Bamba.** So he gets in his pajamas, he stops in front of the mirror, he starts to do his act again. How's he seem to feel right there?

Adel: Happy.

Daniyah: Happy.

T: Definitely know he's happy cuz they tell us. And he says, gonna do his dance again. So, why is he happy right then?

Daniyah: Because, he feels good about volunteering for the [talent show.]

T: [He feels good about] volunteering for the talent show. Why? Because...

Adel: He won.

T: He didn't really win, it wasn't a contest.

Daniyah: It didn't even start... Didn't it?

T: Yeah, this is at home after the show. That's why I was telling you guys to look up the page number. This is the very last page in the story.

Adel: We got it right there.

Daniyah: Yeah.

T: So this is after the show.

Daniyah: Oh yeah, it is.

T: After his dad asks him, "How'd you do that?" Remember?... So (reading text segment) **Manuel, feeling happy, went to his bedroom, undressed, and slipped into his pajamas. He looked in the mirror and began to pantomime La Bamba.** Does he have to practice anymore?

Daniyah: [No.]

Adel: [No.]

T: No, it's all over. So he's starting to do it anyway, because how's he feel about how the day went? He's

Daniyah: Relief-ed.

T: He feels happy, he feels good about volunteering because... (Daniyah gets a marker) Before you write, before you write let's think about this. He feels good about volunteering because. So picture it. It's all over, he goes to his room, he feels happy, he's about to just do his act one more time just for the heck of it cuz he doesn't have to practice. Why is he feeling so good?

Daniyah: Cuz he's relief-ed cuz the day was over. He did, um

Adel: He doesn't have to practice [anymore.]

Daniyah: [He doesn't] have to practice anymore. He got

T: Well he doesn't have to practice anymore but he's about to sing "La Bamba." He's about to do it. He, he feels the urge to do it. Why is, why is

Adel: Cuz he's used to the song.

T: But then why is he feeling happy? He's not feeling relieved, they don't use that word. Why is, why is he feeling good about volunteering? How did it go?

Daniyah: Good.

Adel: Good. Like he wanted it to.

T: Sort of. The act didn't go like how he wanted it to, but in the end did he get what he wanted?

Adel: Yeah.

Daniyah: Yeah... No, actually he didn't because, um, he, he was trying to do a song, he wasn't trying to make people laugh.

T: That's true. Now that's a good point. Except, at the beginning of the story, when he says he's trying out for the talent show, does he say, "Because I've always wanted to be a singer. I've always wanted to sing this song perfectly."

Adel: Yeah.

Daniyah: Yeah... No.

Adel: No.

T: Let's look. It's right here on the first page, it's okay. (reading text) **He was still amazed that he had volunteered. Why did I raise my hand?** We said that that's a bad feeling, right? Like, "Oh, why did I do this?" (reading text) **But in his heart he knew the answer.** He wanted to be an amazing singer. Is that what he said? No. (reading text) **He yearned for the limelight. He wanted applause, he wanted to hear his friends say, [Man, that was bad!]**

Daniyah: [He wanted... He wanted] spotlight. He wanted... he wanted, he wanted clapping. He wanted.

T: Attention.

Daniyah: He wanted attention.

T: Did he get it?

Adel: [Yeah.]

Daniyah: [Yeah.]

T: So in the end, right here... (brief intercom interruption) ... In the end, he's feeling good because, did he get what he wanted?

Daniyah: Yeah.

T: Yeah. He g-, did he get attention?

Adel: Yeah.

T: Did he get applause as loud as a thunderstorm?

Adel: Yeah.

T: Remember it said the applause shook the cafeteria walls. Did his friends say, "That was awesome"? Yeah. So he feels good cuz the day went how he wanted.

Adel: Yeah, but they never said, "That was baaaad."

T: Well, but they said that was... great...

Daniyah: (reading as she writes) He feels good... about...

T: And then the next part's a little tricky too, so I'll come back as soon as you have that part ready.

Daniyah: We did the other one.

T: No, no, no, after the "but" [he's gonna] =

Daniyah: [Oh.]

T: = have another feeling.

Later in the transcript I returned to this group to help them wrestle with the analysis of the second part of the segment, in which doubt is cast on Manuel feeling positively about the experience overall. The *connector* "but" had cued us that the author was juxtaposing a negative feeling against the previous positive one (La Bamba, Day 3):

T: Okay you guys are stuck? [Now.]

Adel: [Yeah.]

T: (reading text segment) **But he stopped because he was tired of the song.** (sigh) It's just, I mean how many times has he sung this song, right now, do you think?

Daniyah: Like, five hundred.

T: Forget about the record even skipping. What did he have to do before? He had to practice all the time, right?

Daniyah: [inaudible]

T: [He's tired of the song.] (reading text segment) **He crawled into bed.**  
When you crawl into bed, how are you feeling?

Adel: [Tired.]

Daniyah: [Sleepy.]

T: Tired, sleepy, exhausted.

Daniyah: He's tired.

T: (reading text segment) **His sheets were as cold as the moon** Do you ever get in your bed and oh, it feels so good cuz [the sheets are like nice and cool?]

Daniyah: [I, yeah.] Yeah, I like it.

T: And here's an important word. (reading text segment) **He was relieved [that the day was over.]**

Daniyah: (reading text segment) **[that the day was over.]**

T: If you had a great day, okay, do you say, (sighs) "I'm glad that's over"?

Daniyah: [Yeah, I'm like, (wipes brow and whistles) I do, yeah.]

Adel: [No. I would say] "The day was awesome!"

T: Yes. If you're falling asleep in bed after you had an awesome day, you might think, (gasps) "Today was" sometimes you can't even sleep cuz you keep thinking how great the day was and you wanna do it [again.]

Adel: [Yeah.]

Daniyah: [Yeah I]... When I sleep, I think of it, I think of, what great, how great I did, but I think "Ooh. Good. That's done. I can go to sleep now."

T: [Well, I don't know.]

Adel: [No.] I would say, "I wanna do it again! I wanna play!"

T: I agree with Adel. You feel like you don't eve-, like when my kids are having a lot of fun and I tell them it's bedtime... They don't wanna go to bed.

Daniyah: *Inaudible*

Adel: [*Inaudible*]

T: [If you get in bed] and you go, (sighs) "Thank God that's over." [How do you]

Adel: [Then]  
you're tired of practicing, doing stuff.

T: Yeah. What, what, how did he feel about the experience there? It was a lot of

Adel: Work.

Daniyah: [Work.]

T: [Yeah.] And how bout his feelings during it? Was it relaxing?

Adel: No.

T: What would you call it instead? It was a lot of work and a l-, and he felt

Adel: He felt like he was in a job.

T: Like a job. Do you know, do you know that word "stress?"

Daniyah: Yeah.

T: Yeah. So it was a lot of work and a lot of stress. So here he's feeling bad about the whole experience because, he's just like, "Man, that was, I do not wanna do that again, That was a lot of stress and a lot of work." Okay? Does that make sense? So he feels good at first because it, things are going well, but then when he lays in bed and thinks about the day, and how this whole thing went, he feels, like, bad that he did it cuz it was stressful and a lot of work. You with me, Daniyah? You look like you're spacing out? Do you know what to write?

Daniyah: I can see you.

T: Okay. (laughs) You know what to write?

Daniyah: *Inaudible*

Adel: He feels bad volunteering because, um, the day was, uh, uh, the day was, like, no,



T: [Yeah, yeah.]

Adel: [He feels bad because] the day was like he just started a job.

T: Yeah, that's right, [but what did]

Antonio (walking up to us): [It was stressful.]

T: Yeah, Antonio's got it. It was stressful and a lot of, [why is he]

Adel: [Work.]

This excerpt and others like it serve as evidence that the analytical task, along with teacher scaffolding, was helping students engage deeply with the text to understand the complexity of the character's feelings. It should also be noted, with respect to FGA pedagogical practices, that the work in this unit helped set the stage for later units and the practice of focusing on specific segments of the text and inferring ideas about the characters and events.

### **Challenges With the Metalanguage**

I had the least trouble with the FGA metalanguage in this unit, which isn't surprising since it went through the most iterations, beginning in the *Language & Meaning* research group work and being tested with a different group of students during the pilot study. In fact, in my post-enactment memo from Day 3 (when the FGA term *connectors* was introduced) in response to the question, "What might you change in this lesson design or enactment if you could do it again?" I wrote, "I don't think I would change anything. It worked really well" (Memo 1.10.13). Another encouraging finding regarding the focal language feature chosen for this unit was evidence of student retention of the idea. Occasionally students noted the use of the word "but" in later units, and some students even applied the *La Bamba* analysis work to later analyses of other texts, using the large "but" on their record sheets when they were explaining conflicting ideas in their answers (see *figure 6.3* in *The New Doctor* section below).

This enactment went smoothly, but the fact that each previous iteration used different focal language features to help students engage with the text—beginning with an analysis of Manuel’s *processes*, then an analysis of the author’s use of *polarity* and *force*, and finally resulting in an analysis of the text’s use of a specific *connector*—shows that many examples of FGA metalanguage can be applied to texts and that through careful planning, reflective enactment, and thoughtful revision, we can discover the most helpful text-language feature relationships.

### **McBroom and the Big Wind: The Wind as a Participant**

The text for this unit describes the ongoing battles between a farming family and the wild prairie wind that threatens their land and safety. The father of the family, who narrates the story, talks about the damage the wind has done to their farm in the past, the precautions they take to protect themselves against it, the ways they learn to use it to their advantage, and then closes the tale with the most damaging and upsetting interaction the family has with the wind. The “big idea” we focused on for this text was that there are certain things that have the potential to both help and harm us, depending on how much control we have over them. The final writing prompt asked students to decide who was ultimately more powerful in the story, the wind or the McBroom family.

### **FGA Metalanguage and the Text’s “Big Idea”**

In FGA, sentences are made up of *participants*, *processes*, and *circumstances*. *Participants* are what traditional grammar considers the noun subjects and noun objects in a sentence; they are the people, places, things, or ideas that are initiating or receiving a *process*. For this unit, I discussed *participants* as features of every sentence, explaining that the

*participant* is the thing that does or receives the action.<sup>48</sup> I pointed out how the wind was a *participant* on every page of the text, and even in nearly every sentence. The students agreed that the wind was ever-present in the narrative. Then the students analyzed text segments that showed one or both of the main *participants* initiating or receiving action.

On Day 2 we discussed the idea of the wind as a *participant*, as I described above. During the Day 2 text analysis, students read segments and used two different columns to identify what the two *participants*—the wind and McBroom/the McBroom family—were doing in that segment. In a third column they decided who was more powerful in that segment. On Day 3, in order to help them explore language further and to reinforce their understanding of *participants*, we discussed the literary technique of personification. During the Day 3 text analysis, students returned to some of their segments and highlighted language that served to personify the wind.

The focus on the FGA metalanguage *participants* was a way to both structure the analysis task and to underscore the “big idea.” It structured the task because it justified viewing the wind as a character in the story, since it was a *participant* in most of the sentences of the text. The silly language and impossible ideas of the tale support this idea through personification of the wind, but naming it as a *participant* allowed us to view personification as enhancing the idea of the wind as a character, not the sole reason to consider it a character. After all, authors personify things that don’t become important characters in a text. The importance of the wind was rooted in its chronic presence as a *participant* in most of the text. More importantly, however, juxtaposing the wind as a *participant* against the McBroom family as a *participant* served to highlight the “big idea”—that the family sees the wind as both helpful and harmful depending on

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<sup>48</sup> I am not confident that this is the best way to define *participants*, which is something I will discuss later in this section. Here, however, I want to describe the enactment as it was, not how it, perhaps, should have been.

their control of it—by tracking who was more powerful throughout the story. The power keeps shifting and the way the wind is seen, as a threat or a tool, is affected by this shift. Analyzing the wind’s behavior as a *participant* in comparison to the other *participants* and posting them in a timeline format underscored the shifting power dynamics. The record sheets show this comparative analysis of the two participants and the assignment of power (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Analysis of participant actions and the power dynamic in one text segment

	What's the WIND doing?	What's McBROOM or the FAMILY doing?	Which participant is more powerful?
<p>The next gusty day that came along, we put it to work for us. I made a wind plow. I rigged a bedsheet and tackle to our old farm plow. Soon as a breeze sprung up I'd go tacking to and fro over the farm, plowing as I went. Our son Chester once plowed the entire farm in under three minutes.</p>	<p>The wind is helping them plow faster.</p>	<p>Chester was steering the plow. The family had to build the windplow.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because <del>he</del> <del>is</del> <del>doing</del> <del>all</del> the wind is helping <del>do</del> them plow faster.</p>
	<p>What's the WIND doing?</p>	<p>What's McBROOM or the FAMILY doing?</p>	<p>Which participant is more powerful?</p>

### Evidence of Student Engagement With the Text

In analyzing the text, students engaged with complex ideas, which is evident in the following transcript excerpt in which they analyzed a complicated text segment that describes how the wind that has blown the children away is also serving as the means for saving the children. The students and I, being careful to precisely assign the role each *participant* is playing in the event, discussed how the wind is both a useful tool and a threat in this story, (McBroom, Day 3):

T: So let's see here. What is McBroom doing? (reading text segment) **Didn't I streak along, though! I was making better time than the young'uns. I kept my hands on the plow handles and steered around barns and farmhouses. I plowed right along and gained rapidly on the young'uns. They were still holding hands and just clearing the tear, tree tops. Before long I was within hailing distance.**

Dimeh: So

T: You have (reading record sheet) McBroom is trying to pull the kids and he kept his hands. Now. They're not on a string yet. Kay? They're blowing ahead of him. And he's riding the plow. So he-, he's not pulling them yet. They don't have the rope yet... So what's he doing? Remember the kids take off and he says to his wife, Don't [worry]

Dimeh: [He's,] he's trying, he, he's, um...  
he's try, he's *inaudible*, he's on the thing, he's trying to go ahead of the kids so he can, he can throw the rope at them and then bring them?

T: Right. So he's trying to catch up, to the kids, right? [He's trying to catch up to them.]

Dimeh: [inaudible]

T: And, um... um...

Dimeh: He's... ...

T: Yeah, so he's trying to catch up to the kids on the wind plow. Right? Well, is he, let's see here, is he successful so far? He uses the wind plow, why? Why doesn't he just run, after them?

Asil: [Because... uh]

Dimeh: [Because... the wind,] the wind plow is more faster =

T: Yeah.

Dimeh: = than him running cuz  
he has the, uh... he has [twelve]

Asil: [The biscuits.]

Dimeh: The biscuits.

T: The biscuits.

Dimeh: And he can't run fast.

T: And also, we have to remember, what controls, what, why is the wind plow so fast? What's makes, what makes it fast?

Asil: Um... [the wind?]

Dimeh: [Oh, the] thing that they made.

T: The sail. But does [he make it] =

Asil: [Oh.]

T: = go fast? Who controls the speed?

Asil: The wind?

Dimeh: Oh, the th-

T: The wind.

Dimeh: Yeah.

T: Right? So this is a very interesting part because, the wind is, causing him problems, but also, is his solution to his problem. What's the problem the wind has caused for him?

Dimeh: To go faster, before the kids.

T: That's how it's helping him, but what's the first problem the wind caused.

Asil: [Um]

Dimeh: [Oh,] he, uh... he blew the kids away.

T: Exactly. The wind blew the kids away. That's a big problem. I hate the wind. But... How can I catch my kids? With my wind plow, which uses...

Asil: Um, the wind.

T: The wind. So the wind is also the solution to his [problem.]

Dimeh: [The wind] is helping.

T: Right. So it's helping and hurting at the same time here. Remember we talked about that love-hate relationship? Like [he's] =

Asil: [Yeah.]

T: = "Oh, I hate the wind," but then he's like, "Oh, thank goodness for the wind." So, McBroom is trying, we're not gonna say he's gonna pull the kids. He's trying to what?... [What is]

Dimeh: [He's,] he's trying to, uh, go faster than the kids.

T: Yes, he's trying to go faster than the kids, using...

Asil: [Um, the rope.]

Dimeh: [Us-,] using the...

T: Wind...

Asil: Wind p-, pl- I don't know how to say it.

T: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You got it. Plow.

Asil: Plow.

What is noteworthy about this conversation is the fact that we weren't viewing this simply through a conflict-and-resolution lens, but through a lens considering what the two *participants* were doing. Thus, the wind's actions were always in the forefront of our minds as we considered its influence on the family's life: when it is being used as a tool and when it is inflicting harm. Without naming the wind as a *participant* that acts and is acted upon, the richness of the "big idea" would have been missed because the wind would be viewed as the story's conflict to be resolved, without helpful actions.

Another example of students' text analysis shows how the metalanguage framed a different way of viewing the series of events. During an important segment when the McBrooms are making efforts to wrest control back from the wind, the power shifts from one *participant* to

the other, and students struggled to see that until we focused on the actions of the wind as a *participant* in the sentences (McBroom, Day 3):

Farrah: Oh! Here. The windproofed the farm every fall, okay. Wind, wiiiiind, ah the wind would slip and slide (trails off mumbling *inaudibly*) Oh, here. (reading record sheet) **By then the boys and I had sh-, reshingled the roof. We caused screw-** Okay, this. It shows here to here. That, uh, =

Alyssa: Um.

Farrah: = the wind, that the wind took off the shingles off the roof.

(some *inaudible* mumbling about who is gonna write)

T: Tell me what you're gonna say.

Farrah: We're gonna say that, um, the wind took off the shingles from the roof.

T: Okay... The, you guys do have a little bit of a tricky one to start off. We do know that the wind did that, but right here is it doing it?

Farrah: Down here... At the [end.]

T: (reading text segment)[**The boys and I had reshingled the roof. We used screws instead of nails.** So is the wind, pulling it off anyway, right here?

Farrah: No.

T: They're talking about how they windproofed the farm. So they're stopping the wind from doing things. So the wind...

Farrah: Did nothing.

T: Yeah, it, it came, but...

Alyssa: It couldn't... do anything?

T: But it couldn't, yeah, well

Farrah: Because he slipped on the, um [buttery] =

T: [On the]



Farrah: = cups.

T: Exactly. So the way, I think the way we put it before was, the wind came, but it couldn't mess anything up. It couldn't destroy anything, it couldn't... It just came, [you know?]

Alyssa: [So,] the wind just came?

T: Yeah. It just came and didn't hurt anything.

Rather than just noting that the family windproofed the farm, we focused on what that meant for the wind's actions as a *participant* and the power dynamics of the relationship. The metalanguage helped us to consistently ask what one *participant's* actions have to do with the other's; it put the wind and McBrooms in constant relationship

Excerpts like these serve as evidence that the analytical task, along with teacher scaffolding, was helping students view the story as more than a simple accounting of a series of events; we kept returning to the "big idea" about who is in control and how that influences the positive or negative way the wind is viewed by focusing on its behavior as a *participant*.

### **Challenges With the Metalanguage**

I identified two challenges with my use of the metalanguage in this unit. First, I struggled when describing what a *participant* is in FGA. I knew how participants functioned within sentences, but had difficulty describing them without talking about the *processes* and *circumstances* that are also necessary to form a complete clause. Since the students weren't familiar with *processes* yet, I ended up talking about *participants* in terms of "actions," which is problematic since many *processes* are not visible actions. During the enactments, this doubt caused me to talk about the FGA term in progressively more awkward and less consistent ways. It also caused me to quickly leave talk of the metalanguage for the more comfortable talk about the wind as a character (McBroom, Day 2):

T: Now, the thing I wanna highlight about this is, in, in Functional Grammar, we call, um, things in sentences and in stories that take action or have action put on them, participants. So, even though it's not an animal or a, uh, person, the wind in this story is still a participant. Almost every sentence talks about the wind. The whole story is the wind, the wind, the wind. So it's almost like the wind is a character in the story, even though it's not a person, right? So we gotta pay attention to what the wind and the family are doing.

Although fumbling and awkwardly-worded, at least my definition of a *participant* was somewhat correct here. But in the other group I misrepresented what a *participant* is in Functional Grammar—making it about the frequency of its mention in the text rather than its role in the sentences—because I was more focused on helping the students see the wind as a character, an idea I was more comfortable talking about (McBroom, Day 2):

T: So the thing about the wind, in this story, is it's like a character. The author talks about it so much, and in Functional Grammar we call that a participant. So, McBroom's a participant, his kids are a participant, and you don't have to be an animal or a person to be a participant. You can be

Antonio: Anything.

T: Anything. So in this story, the wind is actually talked about on every page, almost every sentence. So it's a participant.

This is problematic. The wind is not a *participant* because it is in every sentence of the story. It simply is a *participant* in most sentences, and that can justify elevating it to a character in the story. But I had a lot of trouble figuring out how to talk with FGA novices about what a *participant* is, and because I chose that FGA construct to justify the concept of an inanimate character, I ended up focusing on the latter idea when I felt unsure of my talk about the former.

A second challenge in this unit was that the persuasive prompt was problematic for making the most of the metalanguage. My reflective memos for this unit focus a lot on the influence of the persuasive prompt on the whole unit, including work with the metalanguage. The prompt for *McBroom and the Big Wind* was, “Who is more powerful, the wind or the

McBroom family?” My post-enactment memos show a growing understanding that this prompt is less-than-ideal:

I realized that the prompt—*Who is more powerful?*—is trickier than I’d thought. Though we discussed over all the days the idea of power not just meaning strength, but rather control (i.e., the McBrooms’ power when they use the strength of the wind to their advantage), I caught myself equating power and strength a few times and many students did too. Much of the discussion ended up discussing who “won” the various battles, which was getting slightly off the point (Memo 1.30 & 31.13).

I was realizing, after enactment, that the structure of the analysis somewhat diminished the complexity of the “big idea.” Because of the focus on the story’s important *participants*, I had structured each record sheet to list or summarize what the two *participants* were doing, and then to assess “Which *participant* is more powerful?” which was the persuasive prompt. This prompt did help students track shifts in power as *participants* won and lost control over situations, but it also resulted in a synthesis of the small group work that oversimplified the issue. To scaffold their use of evidence during the TBD and writing, we labeled the pair/threesome conclusions about who was more powerful in each segment with either a “W” (wind) or “McB” (McBroom family). This glossed over some important nuances about power and control in the story, which I recognized later:

[T]he evidence is complicated because even though the McBrooms are more powerful in several segments, this is in different ways. In some they *use* the wind and enjoy its presence, whereas in others they manage to *overcome* the wind, but they are not enjoying it. We labeled those in the same way though. (Memo 1.30 & 31.13)

In order to make the analysis useful for the prompt, I had actually limited the ways we viewed the *participant* interactions, and inadvertently fostered the “who won” lens through which students discussed the prompt. In my memos, I show a growing realization that the prompt was not ideal and I began considering alternatives that might have worked better:

The group 1 discussion opened with a lively debate about whether or not the McBrooms should move to another place—giving up their topsoil and farm—to avoid this crazy

wind. That seems like it could possibly be a better prompt, but it is still problematic because the alternative life is not described. Perhaps prompts that get at ideas of fear (*Are the McBrooms afraid of the wind?*) or affection (*Do the McBrooms like the wind or not?*) would be feasible alternatives too. I might also find a way to focus on the power dynamic during storms and between storms (when it was all McBroom control and enjoyment of the wind) and the idea of prairie weather where the wind is ever-present but storms are not. Maybe the idea of whether the wind's benefits made it worth it to deal with the wind's threat would be a good prompt... *Is the wind helpful enough in everyday life to make up for the trouble it causes during storms?* Maybe something like that, but pithier (Memo 1.30 & 31.13).

For example, if I had asked whether the McBrooms were afraid of the wind for the persuasive prompt, the same *participant*-framed analysis could have been used in a more complex way. It still would have involved listing what *participants* were doing and assessing who is more powerful in each segment, but the labeling of record sheets with “W” or “McB” would have looked at the shifting power and assessed whether the McBrooms were acting in fear or not. This would distinguish between the McBroom family's powerful-and-unafraid moments (i.e., the daughters using the wind to pluck a turkey for them) and the McBroom family's powerful-but-fearful moments (i.e., McBroom chasing after his kids on the windplow), and result in a richer discussion of each *participant* in the different segments of the text. As it was, these two types of moments were pooled together as evidence of McBroom's power status.

### **The New Doctor: Showing Through Doing and Saying Processes**

The text for this unit describes the interactions between Lupe, a little girl living in a small South American village, and the new American doctor who has arrived to open a modern medical clinic. The doctor's familiarity with modern medicine and naivety about the traditional medicine practiced in the village creates questions for Lupe, who is interested in pursuing a future in medicine and has been studying under the village's traditional healer. The “big idea” we focused on for this text was that it can be hard for people to accept that there are different

ways of doing things. The final writing prompt asked students to decide if Dr. Johnson would become open-minded or stay closed-minded about traditional medicine.

### **FGA Metalanguage and the Text’s “Big Idea”**

In the previous section I explained that in FGA, sentences are made up of *participants*, *processes*, and *circumstances*. Whereas *participants* are the people, places, things, or ideas, *processes* are the initiated or received actions or states of being. *Processes* are categorized by FGA into four types: *doing*, *saying*, *sensing*, and *being*. For this unit, I discussed *doing* and *saying processes* with the students, explaining that they are usually *processes* that can be visualized as we read. We can picture a *participant* **jumping** or being **kicked**, which are *doing processes*. We can also picture a *participant* **whispering** or **yelling**, which are *saying processes*. *Saying processes* also cue our attention to any words the *participant* might be saying, which is what we focused on in this analysis. This was meant to be an introduction to these ideas, which we would return to later, and I connected them to the fact that authors choose to show or to tell us information about characters.<sup>49</sup> I explained that in real life, people often don’t say things like “I am a mean person,” or “I am very sad,” but rather we infer these ideas from what they do and say. We went through example sentences that I made up that used *doing* and *saying processes* to show what a *participant* was thinking or feeling. The students understood the idea, and we had lengthy discussions about some of the examples and how important the context around a sentence is for making these inferences as well. Then the students analyzed text segments in which I had highlighted Dr. Johnson’s *doing processes* and the words she said.

On Day 2 we discussed how authors show us things about characters through *doing processes* and the speech cued by *saying processes*, as I described above. During the Day 2 text

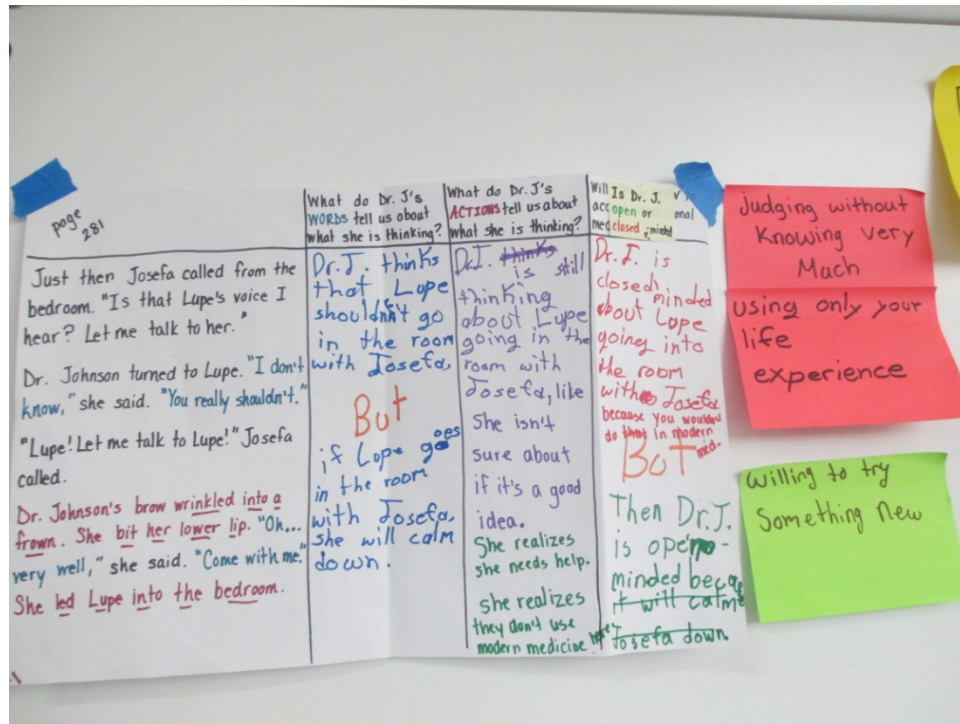
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<sup>49</sup> This idea came out of work done by the *Language & Meaning* research group and is well-explored in Moore & Schleppegrell (in press).

analysis, students read segments and used two different columns to identify what Dr. Johnson’s actions (written in red) and her words (written in green) showed us about what she was thinking in that segment. On Day 3, in order to synthesize the inferences about Dr. Johnson’s thoughts and connect them to the prompt, we discussed how her thoughts about a particular incident or person in these segments also reveal her overall thoughts about traditional medicine. During the Day 3 text analysis, students reviewed the Day 2 work and wrote in a third column about whether these thoughts—shown through her actions and words—pointed to Dr. Johnson being open-minded or closed-minded about traditional medicine, and why.

The focus on the idea of showing-versus-telling and its correlation with certain FGA *processes* was a way to both scaffold the analysis task and to underscore the “big idea.” It served as a scaffold for a task in which I was asking students to combine the types of analysis from the previous two units. Like *La Bamba*, the text analysis would ask about something internal to the focal character: her thoughts. Like *McBroom and the Big Wind*, students would be studying the behavior of the focal *participant*. By focusing their attention on the character’s words and actions, I pointed them to the language needed to make inferences about the doctor’s thinking, and made explicit the idea that they needed to infer since the author was showing and not telling us about her. More importantly, however, analyzing Dr. Johnson’s words and actions served to highlight the “big idea”—that it can be hard for people to accept different ways of doing things—by revealing her inner attitudes about traditional medicine as the story progresses. Her opinions are evolving and dynamic. Analyzing Dr. Johnson’s words and actions and tracking her thinking in a timeline format displayed her inner conflict. The record sheets showed how her thoughts are inferred from her words and actions, and how her thoughts and opinions are developing during the story events (see *Figure 6.3*).

Figure 6.3 Analysis of character's actions and words in one text segment



### Evidence of Student Engagement With the Text

The challenging nature of this text analysis is evident in the following transcript excerpt in which I helped students focus on the specific purpose of the analytical task. Although they had thoughts about Dr. Johnson's words, they needed reminders to focus on what her words show about her *thinking*, which eventually led to a focus on her opinions about traditional medicine (Doctor, Day 3):

- T: So let's look at the first set of words. (reading text segment) **I could use some help, Dr. Johnson said, but a curandera... no.** ... What's Dr. Johnson thinking there? What do her words show us she thinks?
- Farrah: She doesn't want cur-, curan-
- Zeina: Curandera.
- Alyssa: She doesn't want
- Farrah: She doesn't want [curandera]

T: [You're telling me] what she wants. What does she think? If she says **I could use some help, Dr. Johnson said, but a curandera... no.** Dr. Johnson thinks...

Alyssa: She's being closed-minded about a [curandera.]

T: [You gotta] finish this sentence. Don't tell me she wants. Don't tell me she's being. Dr. Johnson thinks...

Farah: That...

Alyssa: That...

Farah: That she needs help?

T: Right. She does think she needs help...

Farah: But she doesn't want [a curandera.]

Alyssa: [A curandera.]

T: So what does she think? Why, why... Why doesn't she want a curandera? What does that show us about what she thinks?

Farah: [Be-]

Alyssa: [What] is a curandera?<sup>50</sup>

Farah: I- =

T: It's a healer.

Farah: =A he-

Alyssa: Ohh.

Farah: Because, like, she thi-, she thinks a curandera doesn't, like, i-, it's like, she doesn't do, right.

T: Yeah. If she's saying "I could use help," but is still saying no way to a curandera, it's because she thinks a curandera, what, [Farah?]

Farah: [Is not,] (stutters), it doesn't, like, it's not really a healer. She's not good.

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<sup>50</sup> Alyssa was absent for the initial reading, when we defined some of this vocabulary.



T: [She's not good.]

Alyssa: [Oh, oh,] it's witchcraft?

T: Yeah, you could say that. She thi-, Dr. Johnson thinks, um, a curandera is not good, practices witchcraft, whatever you want to say.

Once I helped the students to focus on the specific question driving the task, they were able to correctly infer Dr. Johnson's thoughts from her words, which helped them to see her initial resistance to traditional medical practices.

In another important segment of the text, we see Dr. Johnson beginning to relent in her opinions because she is sensing they go against the grain of the community. Her desire to stick to modern medical protocol and her desire to please her patient are in conflict, and the students were able to see that when they looked at her words (Doctor, Day 3):

T: Now, let's see if the rest of her words say, show the same thinking, or if her thinking changes. Then she says, (reading text segment) **It's not going to be a good birth if she is so upset. Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer.** So what do those words tell us she's thinking?

Alyssa: That, she might be thinking about letting her help.

T: Say it a little louder, Alyssa?

Alyssa: That she might be, um, thinking about letting, um, Manuelita help.

T: Well, she is, gonna let Manuelita help, cuz she's telling her to go get her. So if she's gonna let Manuelita help, she thinks...

Alyssa: That maybe she could help?

T: She thinks that maybe Manuelita could help. Now let's look a little more closely here, though. She says, **Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here.** She doesn't say, "Maybe Manuelita could help me." [She says,] =

Alyssa: [Ohh.]

T: = "Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this Manuelita just to be here." So why does she want Manuelita now? If she's not gonna let her help, she's just gonna let her be there.

Alyssa: [Cuz the lady?]

Farrah: [Oh, like, just to, like,]

T: What?

Alyssa: Cuz the lady?

T: Cuz the lady.

Farrah: Just like, so she could learn from her... like, uh, from Dr. Johnson, she'll, um, Manuelita will just watch Dr. Johnson do the real, [uh, stuff.]

T: [Oh, so] maybe she's thinking she could show, that's an interesting thought,

Farrah: Maybe she's thinking that Dr... Maybe she thinks Manuelita could learn from her?

Farrah: Yeah.

T: But what, what changed her thinking here? Why is here she saying, "No way," like, like it's witchcraft, it's dangerous, and then here she says, "Oh, maybe it wouldn't hurt anything." [H-]

Farrah: [Um,] maybe, like, she'll say, "Okay, let her try, and then if she doesn't do it, let me do it."

T: Maybe, but she doesn't even say she's gonna let her try. She says she's just gonna be there. I wanna go back to what Alyssa said. She said because of the, the woman, or the lady, I forget what you said. But... why is she letting her come now?

Alyssa: [Because]

Farrah: [Oh,] because, like... um, because the lady, she said, "No, I want Manuelita," And then she's saying it cr-, like talking, and then she, um, and then she, um, and then she like, "Okay, let, let her try"... Like, "Let her do it."

T: So she's thi-, well she's, you gotta, you keep going back to that, Farrah. But she's right here, later on maybe she thinks that, but right here she's not

gonna let Manuelita do anything. All she says is she's gonna let her be there... Why is she, why is... What's she thinking here? Up here she said no way. And down here she says, "Okay, she could just come [be here.]"

Farrah: [Maybe,] maybe she's not getting, um, Manue-, um, the lady won't let, uh... like, uh

T: [Yeah? ]

Farrah: [The]

T: Josefa. The lady who's having the [baby.]

Farrah: [Ye-,] yeah. Josefa, maybe she won't, she won't, she'll stay crying, until, um, uh, Manue-, uh, [Manue-]

T: [Yes.] (high fives  
Farrah)

Farrah: Manuelita comes, and then she'll stop crying so, um, Dr., um, Johnson will do her work.

T: Okay. Very good, Farrah. So let's put this into a "Dr. Johnson thinks" statement. (reading record sheet) Dr. Johnson thinks a healer is not good, it's just witchcraft... But, so let's put a big "but" (girls giggle)... Ha, ha, ha. Big but. Is just witchcraft, but, Dr. Johnson thinks... How do we say what Farrah was just expressing in that statement? [Doctor]

Farrah: [inaudible] um... ..

T: Dr. Johnson, what does she think about Josefa?

Alyssa: Um

Farrah: Um, Jofa-, Josefa will stop crying beca-, until, will bring her, um, Manuelita?

T: Josefa won't stop crying until they bring her Manuelita. Yeah... Good job.

Dr. Johnson's words were the students' means for detecting nuances in her shifting attitudes.

Rather than viewing this as a complete acceptance of traditional medicine, students became aware of the caveat in Dr. Johnson's change of heart.

Excerpts like these serve as evidence that, with support, students were able to take the character's words and actions and co-construct inferences about her thinking. The analysis helped them grapple with the text's "big idea" in a deeper way, witnessing Dr. Johnson's inner struggle and moments of change and flexibility.

### **Challenges With the Metalanguage**

I identified two challenges with my use of the metalanguage in this unit. The first echoes my struggles with *McBroom*: I neglected explicitly defining the terminology because I felt more comfortable talking about the familiar literary technique of "showing" in terms of "words and actions." I made a link between these FGA terms and a literary technique much the way I did with *participants* and personification, with somewhat similar results. Because of my insecurity about defining the terminology for students, I avoided it or rushed through it, as in this excerpt in which we are looking at example sentences I made up for illustrating the concepts (Doctor, Day 3):

T: Because authors, when they write they give part-, remember when we talked about participants? Like the storm, the wind as a participant? Or different people are participants in stories. They all have processes. So, Mike's process here is stomping off to his room. Jenny's process is not studying for the test. And sliding her eyes over to the paper. Nick's process is sharing his sandwich. So here, the processes are either the words, they're, they're s-, um, are either saying processes and we look at the words she's saying, or, the actions she's doing.

With the other group I tried to talk about *processes* more explicitly, but fumbled around in a manner reminiscent of my attempts to define *participants* in the previous unit (Doctor, Day 3):

T: So, when authors, in Functional Grammar we talk about processes. Remember we talked about participants before? Characters or animals or sometimes, what was the process we talked about that is, er, I'm sorry, what was the participant we talked about that wasn't a character or an animal.

Ali: Like, something that only shows up once.

T: No. What was the participant we talked about a lot that, the participant that almost was like a character even though it wasn't a

Riad: The wind?

T: [The wind.]

Ali: [Oh, I was] gonna say that.

T: And the reason we knew that is the wind did a lot of processes in that story. So in here, all of these are processes. They're doing processes. (reading chart) Mike stomped. Jenny didn't study. Nick shared. That's stuff they're, that's a process, they're doing something. So the processes we're focusing on this time are doing processes. There's other kinds of processes we're gonna talk about in, for another story. But right now we're looking at the process that Dr. Johnson's doing, her action, and what it tells us about what she is thinking. But we're also looking at the words.

I was clearly struggling to use metalanguage with students, even though I knew how to identify these language features in the text. This led me to focus more on the literary practice at the expense of the FGA metalanguage, a choice I was aware of: “I took time to re-focus on the ‘show vs. tell’ concept and ignore the idea of processes for a little while” (Memo, 2.13.13). In my plan, it seemed coherent and symbiotic to talk about showing-versus-telling along with an introduction to these two *processes*. My reflection on the enactment, however, shows this wasn't so:

The FGA part of this was more cumbersome. As opposed to discussing a concrete word (i.e., “but”) or a simpler concept carried over the whole text (i.e., the wind as a participant) we are now looking at processes, which are dynamic and complex as we look at different segments. I made a few planning errors:

1. I realize I was focusing on both “showing vs. telling” and doing/saying processes, and introducing them at the same time is overwhelming.

2. I'm not really talking about saying processes, but rather what is being said, so that

added to my cumbersome explanation.

3. My FGA example sentences only used doing processes to illustrate showing. They worked well, but I didn't use spoken dialogue to illustrate this, even though that was part of the analysis (Memo, 2.12.13).

Currently, I do not agree with all of these assessments<sup>51</sup>, but they nevertheless show my level of discomfort as a novice teacher of FGA working with the terminology and metalanguage. In the end, I did emphasize the idea that the author shows us things about Dr. Johnson, and the specific *processes* used to do that were highlighted for analysis in the students' text segments, but I abandoned the FGA terminology and metalanguage until a later unit. Still, students were implicitly focused on an analysis of the language feature I had intended by focusing on what I had highlighted, which was what Dr. Johnson was doing and saying.

The second challenge was that a prompt on the record sheet was problematic for making the most of these language features. Even though I asked students to focus on what Dr. Johnson said and did and to articulate what this showed she was thinking, the last step in the analysis was far more complex than I'd realized, and the highlighting of these language features wasn't enough to lead us there. During this step, the students had to articulate whether Dr. Johnson seemed open- or closed-minded in that segment and why, which was the persuasive prompt they would address in the TBD and their writing. After they articulated what Dr. Johnson was thinking based on her highlighted actions and words, I provided the sentence frame "Dr. Johnson is open/closed-minded because..." Students really struggled to give a response that wasn't circular logic. For example, their record sheets would say that Dr. Johnson "biting her lip" showed she thought Lupe shouldn't come in the room. Then they would say she is closed-

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<sup>51</sup> For example, Moore & Schleppegrell (in press) offer evidence that showing-versus-telling and processes can be introduced in tandem.

minded because she doesn't think Lupe should come in the room. Upon reflection after a frustrating enactment, I realized that I was looking for some complex inferences here—answers like “Dr. Johnson is closed-minded because she doesn't think Lupe should come in the room *because children don't usually assist or apprentice doctors in the United States*”—and in some cases I myself couldn't even articulate a non-circular reasoning for why she was open- or closed-minded in a particular segment. Once again, a revised persuasive prompt could have better supported this stage of analysis. I might have asked “Why might Dr. Johnson think this?” to provoke inferences. That is what a successful reader would do when analyzing Dr. Johnson's *doing* and *saying processes*; they would consider what the *processes* show about her thoughts, and then they would use that idea and the rest of the text to construct inferences about why she might be thinking those things. Instead, in my eagerness to explicitly connect the record sheets to the prompt, I overlooked the complex inferencing required and ended up with a cumbersome analysis activity. If I had allotted more time and support for students to consider the differences in the medical practices in order to construct inferences about why Dr. Johnson might be thinking the things her *processes* reveal, the analysis of *processes* could have enriched student understanding of the “big idea” that it can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things.

### **Marven of the Great North Woods: Turned-up and Turned-down Language**

The text for this unit describes the experiences of an eight-year-old boy who leaves home to take a bookkeeping job with a lumber company. Marven is exposed to many new things in this place, including the humungous lumberjacks that he enjoys watching, but only from afar. The “big idea” we focused on for this text was that new situations can be both fascinating and

intimidating. The final writing prompt asked students to decide if Marven could be happy in the great north woods or if he will want to return back home.

### **FGA Metalinguage and the Text’s “Big Idea”**

In FGA, *polarity* and *force* serve to give a sense of the positive or negative quality of aspects of the sentence, and a sense of the intensity of aspects of a sentence, respectively. For this unit, I discussed these two FGA constructs with students—combining the ideas by using the terms *turn it up* and *turn it down*<sup>52</sup>—and explained that often authors choose particular words to do this. We went through many example sentences that I made up to illustrate several ways authors turn the language up or down, including: adding describing words, using specific and precise vocabulary, inserting details, and using certain words and phrases such as “very” or “a little.”<sup>53</sup> Then students analyzed text segments that contained examples of *turned-up* or *turned-down* language.

On Day 2 I didn’t introduce or use any FGA terminology or metalinguage. During the Day 2 text analysis, students read segments and identified how Marven was feeling during each segment. On Day 3, I introduced the terms *turning it up* and *turning it down* and explored many ways that they can be done, as I described above. During the Day 3 text analysis, students returned to their segments from the previous day and highlighted examples of language that *turned-up/down* the idea of Marven’s feeling, which they had identified the previous day.

The focus on *turning it up/down* was a way to enhance student awareness of how we make inferences and to underscore the “big idea.” It helped make explicit for students how author’s word choices help us infer characters’ feelings. Students articulated Marven’s feelings

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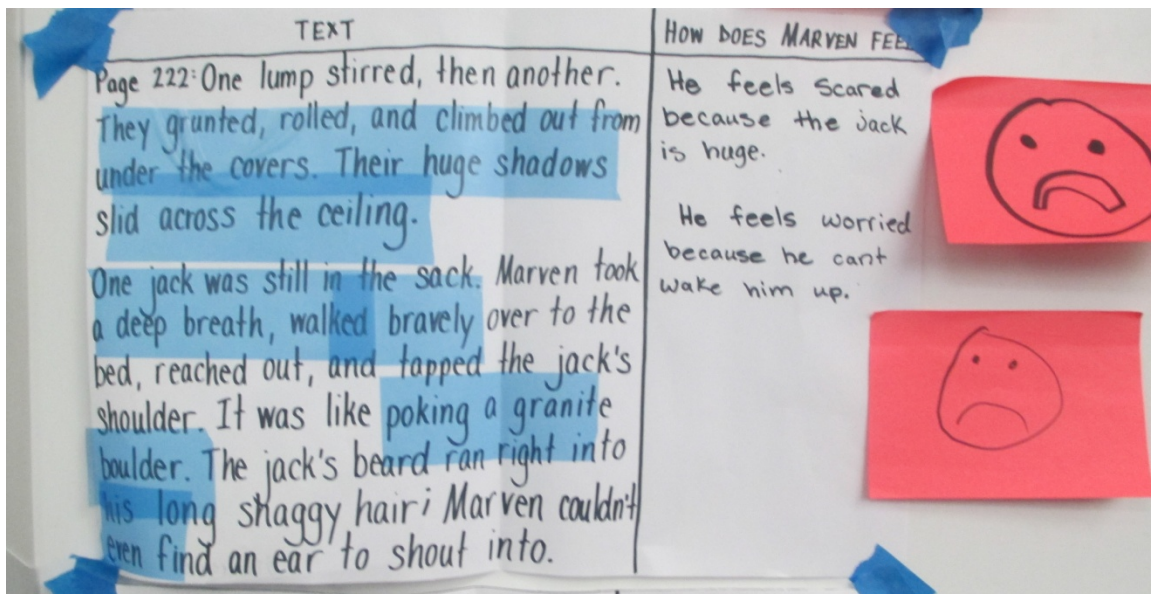
<sup>52</sup> This idea came out of work done by the *Language & Meaning* research group and is well-explored in Moore & Schleppegrell (in press).

<sup>53</sup> I developed this list of ways authors can *turn it up/down* on my own, not in collaboration with the *Language & Meaning* research group, so it lacked their expert input.



the previous day, but returning to the segments to find language that had helped make that idea evident highlighted the importance of text language and the idea that we often take one idea (i.e., Marven noting the huge shadows of the lumberjacks) and develop another idea from that (i.e., Marven being intimidated). More importantly, however, tracking Marven’s feelings as he spends more time in his new surroundings underscores the “big idea”—that he is both intimidated and fascinated—by showing contrast and gradual change. As he gets used to things, his intimidation dwindles, leaving more fascination, and eventual comfort. Analyzing the language used to describe Marven’s behavior and his new surroundings showed us the complexity of his experience. The record sheets tracked these feelings and showed how they were conveyed through vivid language choices (see *Figure 6.4*).

*Figure 6.4 Feelings conveyed through turned-up language*



### **Evidence of Student Engagement With the Text**

During the analysis of the text segments, the students were adept at finding examples of this *turned-up* language that helps make the author’s message clear. The following excerpt shows

how we discussed the author's description of Marven waiting in the lumberjacks' bunkhouse to wake them up, and the way it conveys tension and fear (Marven, Day 4):

- T: How's it going here, guys?...
- Dimeh: [Good.]
- T: (looking over record sheet) [Yes!] Good job. It doesn't just say... "They got out of bed." Right? "They grunted, rolled, and climbed out from under the covers. Their huge sh-," exactly. They t-, they made, this idea of them being huge... turned it up, right?
- Asil: Yeah.
- T: Um, let's see if we can find language in the second part, that shows how worried he is. What language shows how worried he is?... ..
- Dimeh: "It was like poking a granite boulder"?
- T: Yeah, that definitely tells us how huge he is too... (Dimeh gets more highlighting tape)... .. So we're turning it up here. He doesn't just say "His body was hard." Like, his body was like a rock. It was "poking a granite boulder." (Dimeh still taping)... .. There's something earlier. Start here, and tell where you get the idea that Marven's worried... .. He could have just said, "Marven walked over to the bed." But what does he say?...
- Dimeh: "Marven took a deep breath"?... ["walked bravely"?)
- T: [(breathes deeply)] Why would you take a deep breath?
- Dimeh: Cuz you're, like, worried and s-, scared.
- T: Yes... .. And did he just walk over to the bed? Or what did, how did he [walk?]
- Dimeh: [Walked] bravely.
- T: Walked bravely

The students had done some of the work independently, and then they added to this work when I came to assist them.

Another excerpt shows students that needed more help identifying *turned-up* language, but the talk we had about alternative phrasings and the message the author is trying to convey was helpful for making the analytical process explicit for them (Marven, Day 4):

T: So. (reading text segment) **He put on his skis and followed the sled path into the woods.**<sup>54</sup> Hmm... How, what does, how does this turn it up? I don't see it. Can you guys explain it to me?

Riad: Um, because [he hasn't,] =

Zeina: [inaudible]

Riad: =Marven, Marven feels excited because he finally had the time to go skiing.

Zeina: It's just for the woods [inaudible]

T: [Yeah,] but this is telling me what he did, but how do I get more of that feeling of excitement here? I don't see the words that make me see his excitement here.

Riad: Um...

Zeina: He has the time to go skiing?

Riad: He, um, he put on his skis and he's been wanting to put on his skis ever since he got there.

Zeina: You, he always wanted to go, to it.

Riad: Cuz it say right here. (reaches for text)

T: No, I know, you're putting, you guys are putting the ideas together, I just think you guys are doing it with what you know, about, what was said. I don't think this language does it. Like, it doesn't say, "So he, quickly, strapped on his skis and went, as fast as he could out to the woods." You know what I'm saying?

Zeina: Ohh.

T: Like, that's what would turn up the idea of his excitement. Here, it's just telling us what he did. "He put on his skis and he followed the sled path [into the woods.]"

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<sup>54</sup> This is the sentence the students highlighted as an example of *turned-up* language.

Riad: [And *inaudible*,] he could have said, "He put on his, like, favorite skis," cuz, he probably had those for a long time.

T: Right, so if he had enhanced it... um... that way, it would have turned it up.

Here students were engaging in inferencing, but through metalanguage we were able to see that the segment they had highlighted didn't cue those inferences through *turned up* language.

Interestingly, we discussed how the language could have been revised to do so.

Excerpts like these serve as evidence that students were connecting language and meaning. The task was a means of making explicit what students were inferring internally. Although the "big idea" of Marven's simultaneous intimidation and fascination is not fully synthesized until the TBD the next day, this text analysis was supportive of students' co-construction of meaning, which kept them mindful of tracking Marven's feelings.

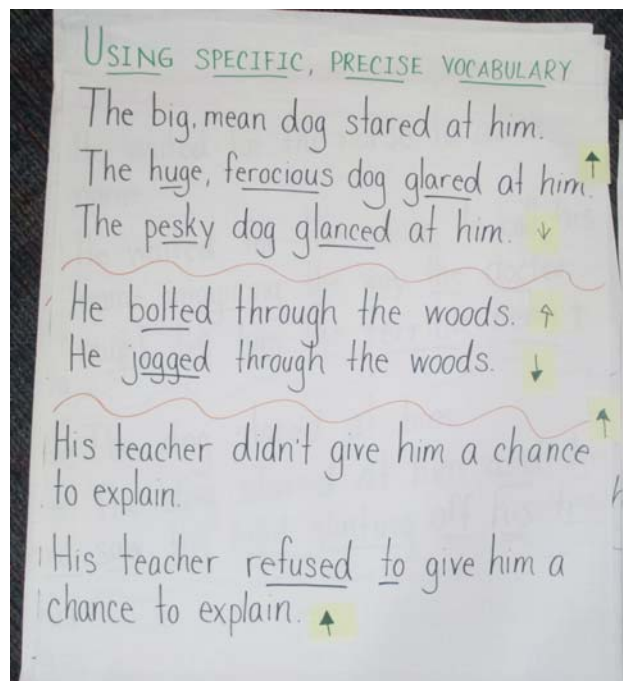
### **Challenges With the Metalanguage**

I was more effective at using the FGA terminology and metalanguage with *Marven and the Great North Woods* than I was with the two units preceding it. I did not struggle as much with talking about these FGA constructs. The explanation of *turned-up/down* language went well, and students seemed to enjoy examining the differences in meaning across the example sentences. Providing examples of different ways of doing it—through adding details, choosing precise words, etc.—was also helpful when students were debating whether certain language was *turned-up* or *turned-down*. I also had chosen a prompt with a coherent connection to the linguistic analysis work; since the "big idea" related to Marven's ultimate desires—to stay or leave this new place—we were continually focused on his emotional state, which was explicitly connected to our search for language that clearly realized his feelings. In these ways, this unit

was a welcome relief after my dismay with myself over the previous two units and my handling of the terminology and metalanguage.

That said, I still identified a familiar challenge with my use of the metalanguage in this unit. In spite of being more comfortable talking about *turned-up/down* language, there were still struggles to label it accurately. For example, sometimes enhanced language is difficult to categorize as being *turned-up* versus *-down*. The saying process “said” could be changed to “whispered.” One’s instinct might be that this is turned *down*, since whispering is a quieter way of saying something. However, if the idea the author is expressing is that the participant is nervous, using the word “whisper” actually turns *up* this idea. I anticipated this confusion because it came up in the pilot work, so I addressed it by tying the different examples of *turning it up/down* to an anchor idea. For each set of example sentences, I verbally articulated the idea the hypothetical author wanted to express, for example that a dog was frightening, a runner was hurrying, or a teacher was unfair (see *Figure 6.5*).

*Figure 6.5 Examples of turned-up/down language*



This approach was effective according to my self-assessment after the enactments:

In both groups, the examples we talked about for the concept of “turn it up/down” worked well and the students seemed to understand. What I think helped, since I had tried this during the pilot and had time to work on how to present it, was orienting the example sentences within a big idea.<sup>55</sup> For example, when comparing “The dog stared at me. / The big ferocious dog stared at me. / The pesky little dog stared at me.” we have to have a big idea established because both sentences could seem to “turn up” details about the dog, but if the big idea is fear of the dog, only one does. This meshed so nicely with connecting the FGA analysis to the previous day’s work. We didn’t want to look for any old example of turning it up, but rather the ones that connected to Marven’s feelings, identified the day before. I was so happy with how this went. (Memo, 2.28 & 3.1.13)

Again, we see how the iterative process led to improvements. A second example of struggling for accuracy with the metalanguage is best illustrated by a reflection from a post-enactment memo:

A constant challenge I have with “turn it up/down” is avoiding the word “strength” which is problematic because weakness can also be “turned up.” I rely on the word “intensity” but I don’t feel like that resonates with the students as much, so I end up slipping in the word “strength” even though I don’t want to. The students seemed to get the concept beautifully, but if the work on this concept got more nuanced, the metalanguage around it is tricky. (Memo 2.28 & 3.1.13)

This struggle highlights the challenge of talking about language choices precisely, and the necessary meta-awareness of what we are saying to students. An excerpt of my use of this metalanguage with the students shows that I was able to explain the FGA construct, but still struggling a little with the accuracy of my explanation (Marven, Day 3):

T: When authors write, they choose words, that try to... convey... to try to tell you the intensity of their idea. Maybe the intensity of what Marven's feeling. Or, in other books, the intensity of what Dr. Johnson is thinking. Basically, how powerful, how strong, how big is this idea, you know? And they, what we call that, in Functional Grammar, is turning it up, or

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<sup>55</sup> I apologize for the confusing overlapping language here. Though I use “big idea” to refer to the important theme used to frame each unit, I used the same phrase in this set of exercises with students and wanted to be accurate in my description of the work. If I could do it over, I would choose a different term for the latter, but chose accuracy for the sake of this representation.

turning it down. It's like the volume on your television, or your radio [or your iPod.]

Daniyah: [Or your phone.]

T: You turn it up, it's more intense. You know, you're, it's like, it's like, [bigger to you.]

Adel: [You hear it more.]

T: You turn it down, it's less intense. Okay? But it doesn't always mean bigger. You can turn d-, you can turn up the idea of being small, if you say, instead of saying, "Oh, it was small," if you say, "It was tiny." You're actually turning it up, cuz you're making that idea of smallness bigger. So, the bi-, the, the hard thing about this, to keep in mi-, keep in mind, we have to know what the... big idea of the sentence or paragraph is, and think about, are the words making it more that idea or less that idea.

This talk about the FGA construct exhibits both the potential and problems that I reflected on in my memos.

### **Toto: The Four *Processes* & Their Connection to Showing-Versus-Telling**

The text for this unit describes the experiences of Suku, a timid boy in an African village who ends up rescuing an injured elephant who, out of curiosity for the outside world, has wandered from the protected game reserve. Suku develops a sense of bravery through the experience, and Toto the elephant develops an appreciation for the safety of his home and herd. The “big idea” we focused on for this text was that sometimes an important life experience can change us forever. The final writing prompt asked students to decide if it was Toto or Suku who changed more in the story.

### **FGA Metalanguage and the Text’s “Big Idea”**

As discussed, in FGA, sentences are made up of *participants*, *circumstances*, and four types of *processes*—*doing*, *saying*, *sensing*, and *being*— that realize the participants’ initiated or

received actions or states of being. For this unit, I returned to our discussion of showing-versus-telling and the links to the different *processes*. I discussed the different *processes* more explicitly this time, explaining that usually *doing* and *saying processes* were the things we could visualize happening (even subtly, as in “reading”) and that *sensing* and *being processes* were things happening internally for a participant. We connected the former two *processes* to authors showing us things about a character and the latter two to authors telling us things about a character. We went through many example sentences that I made up to illustrate these categories and students quickly grasped the *doing* and *saying processes* and began to distinguish between *sensing* and *being processes*, though the latter were more challenging for them (as I expected). We had lively conversations about tricky examples that could be viewed as *doing* or *sensing processes*, such as “tasted the coffee” or “looked out the window.” Then students analyzed text segments that contained different *processes* and categorized them by color into the “showing” *processes* and the “telling” *processes*.

On Day 2 I didn’t introduce or use any FGA terminology or metalanguage. During the Day 2 text analysis, students read segments that focused on Toto or Suku and placed them in one of two columns that corresponded to the characters’ different traits during the story.<sup>56</sup> On Day 3, I revisited the metalanguage *processes* more formally and discussed the four different types, as I described above. During the Day 3 text analysis, students revisited the segments from the previous day, which had the *processes* highlighted, and marked them as “showing” *processes* (the *doing* and *saying*) or “telling” *processes* (the *sensing* and *being*). Discussion of these categorizations involved distinguishing between the two types of processes within these categories too.

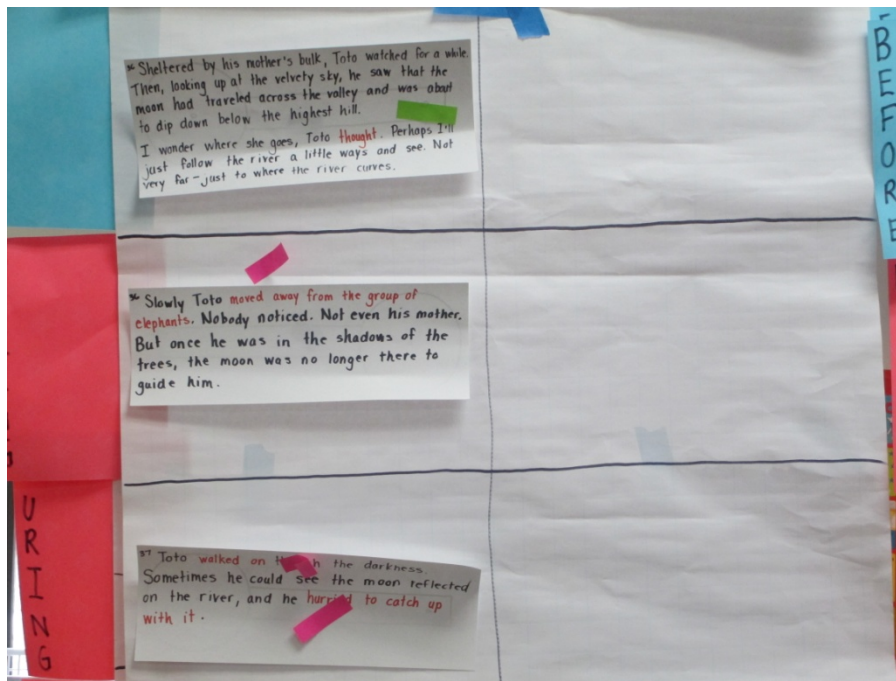
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<sup>56</sup> Suku began the story “timid and afraid” but became “confident and brave.” Toto began the story “having wanderlust” but became “content to be home.”



The focus on the FGA construct of different *process* types was a way to scaffold analysis and to enhance their awareness of how language realizes meaning. Similar to the work on *The New Doctor*, by focusing their attention on the character's *processes*, I pointed them to the evidence needed to make inferences about the two characters. Similar to the work on *Marven of the Great North Woods*, focusing on the four different types of *processes* helped students see the different ways authors can convey ideas about a character. Analyzing the characters' *processes* and tracking their changing traits across the story displayed the impact of this event on their lives. The record sheets show how these feelings were conveyed through all the different *processes* (see Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6 Character traits conveyed through different processes



### Evidence of Student Engagement With the Text

During analysis, students explored the metalanguage in their attempts to categorize ambiguous *processes* in their segments. The goal was not to agree on a “right” answer, but

rather—through the debate—to get a better understanding of these categories of *processes* and the meanings they realize. Suku’s “praying” is great grist for this type of thinking (Toto, Day 4):

- T: Okay, we had a debate, we, we debate this one a lot. So =
- Ali: [Prayed silently.]
- Riad: [I, I,] said, um, green,<sup>57</sup> but he said
- Ali: Prayed silently.
- T: =Now tell me why  
you're thinking pink. It's not wrong. Neither of you are really wrong. Tell  
me why you're thinking pink, though.
- Ali: Because you, you do it. [Like, you can actually do it.]
- T: [So you can picture him] =
- Riad: [He's saying, he prayed silently, he's doing it.]
- T: = praying? (Ali nods)  
What's he doing in your mind, when you picture [Suku praying?]
- Ali: [Uhh,] praying?
- T: Can you be Suku and show me?
- Ali: Uh, not really.
- Riad: He's going like this. (mimes praying)...
- T: So you're looking at the bodily actions. Okay. Cuz what I was thinking  
was... he... he, uh
- (Someone comes in looking for a missing sweater)... ..
- T: "He prayed silently." So praying, Riad, [you're]
- Riad: [Yeah, but] I'm saying, um, green.  
He's saying pink.
- T: Oh, yeah, you're [saying pink.]

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<sup>57</sup> For the task, the colored tabs indicated different process types: pink tabs were used for *doing* and *saying* and green tabs were used for *sensing* and *being*.

Ali: [inaudible] I'm saying pink...

T: Here's my issue with it, Ali, is, I can put my hands like this =

Ali: Yeah.

T: right now? Do you know if I'm praying or not? = am I praying

Riad: [No.]

Ali: [Oh,] no.

Riad: See, Ali?

T: Where is the praying happening?

Riad: In h-, inside of him.

T: In his heart, in his head. [And especially because it says he prayed si-,]

Riad: [Cuz he's not saying it out loud.]

T: Exactly, Riad. If it just said, "he prayed," it might be a saying process. Or a doing. That would be another debate. But, it says he does it silently. So we can't hear it. We can't see it. It's in his mind. [Okay?]

Ali: [Oh.] Kay.

T: So that's why I think this one's a green. But, I think it's a, it's a, one very commonly debated.

Ali: Which one is it?

T: Y- you could lea-, [well, I really think that one's] =

Ali: [inaudible]

T: = a green.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> This debate about categorizing the process was likely influenced by different cultural ideas about what it means to pray. In the larger transcript, I discuss with these students the idea that prayer can involve specific bodily actions, such as those done in the Muslim faith, but can also refer to an internal dialogue with God.

I had a similar discussion with another group in which there wasn't a debate among the members, but I wanted to intentionally complicate their thinking about a *process*, to get away from fast, correct answers and into more exploration of language choices and meaning. The words that have to do with inner sensations, but also involve bodily movements are ideal for talking about the difficulty of categorizing some *processes* (Toto, Day 4):

T: Now, can I talk about one with you guys? It's not wrong, what you put. It's just one of the complicated ones, so I wanna talk to you guys about it. "He watched enviously." So when you're watching something, it has to do with seeing, you know what I mean? But, it's kind of like the coffee-tasting, or the shirt-smelling. It could, what you're just, just, it could be about the sensation in your brain of seeing something, of watching something, or it could be, um, I watched the birds, you can picture my head moving. I'm doing something right? I'm watching the birds. Now, in the other group, we talked about this idea of enviously. Do you remember what "envy" means?... Envy, he's envious, of the birds...

Ahlam: Jealous?

T: Yeah, you want something. You're jealous. He wishes he was like the bird. So, we were talking about in that group, if it's saying that he's, he's seeing them, and that he's envious, is the author showing us or telling us, [right there.]

Ahlam: us. [Telling]

T: Telling us. Yeah, it's more... I, I think it's more of a sensing because he's seeing it and inside the author's telling us what he's feeling. Does that make sense? But I don't think the pink is totally wrong. So, if you wanna put both, that's okay with me. But I, I was leaning toward sensing for that one, okay?... Good job, you guys.

Later the members of this group show evidence of this complicated way of thinking about the task and even appropriate the same way of marking their thinking (Toto, Day 4):

T: I love this. You guys marked "looked" with both?

Group: Yeah.

T: Very good thinking. It's a tricky one... Cuz you can picture him looking, but, you know inside he's seeing those hills like, like... Yeah, it's tricky.

These excerpts serve as evidence of students engaging in talk about language and how it connects to meaning, especially when it is complicated by different interpretations of the language.

### **Challenges With the Metalanguage**

I identified one challenge with my use of the focal language features in this unit: there was a lack of connection between the feature and the “big idea” of the text. Initially I was very pleased because I had improved in my confidence and ability to use the metalanguage. Whereas I had struggled to talk about *doing* and *saying processes* explicitly during *The New Doctor*, in this unit I discussed all four *processes* with the students. This was effective, rather than overwhelming, since they were able to juxtapose them against each other and we could revisit the showing-versus-telling idea as a lens for categorizing the different *process* types. There is a caveat to this success, however: the zeal I felt about the successful metalanguage and student interest in debating each other led to my mis-assessment of the benefits of the work. Students were able to use the terminology, and talk about language was occurring in all of the groups in nuanced ways. This seemed great. But when I was preparing for Day 4 and looked at all of our segments organized into a vertical timeline, I realized the challenge: I didn't have anything to say about the different *processes*—labeled accurately and clearly by students—and the text's “big idea.” I fumbled around to note possible patterns (i.e., Suku's *processes* tended to be more external at the beginning of the text and became more internal), but the connection of these patterns to the “big idea” was not clear. I talked a little bit about how Suku's transition into someone braver was an internal experience, so perhaps the author was trying to gradually let us more into Suku's head, but it was a stretch. Moreover, Toto's timeline didn't even have an

identifiable pattern in the *processes* with respect to the character traits that framed out “big idea.” Thus, the opposing danger this lesson made evident was that at the other end of the continuum from neglecting the metalanguage—as I felt I’d done in *McBroom and the Big Wind* and *The New Doctor*—is ignoring the “big idea.” In this case, we got so focused on the metalanguage, I had lost sight of the “big idea” of the text and the metalanguage’s connection to meaning. The active small group work was misleading because though the students were talking and using metalanguage, they were talking about the *processes* in a reductionist way, failing to root the analyses in a deeper understanding of the characters, as shown here (Toto, Day 3):

Riad: (reading text segment) **Suddenly the silence at the river was broken by a loud rustling sound. The sound... The sound came again not just a rus-... a rustling this time, but a snapping of twigs and a swishing of the tall grasses. Carefully, and a little fearfully, Suku moved around the next curve into the, in the path. And then he stopped again.**

Ali: Doing.

Riad: "Moved around the next curve in the path." Uh, that's a doing.

Ali: That's a doing.

Riad: Yay, it's a doing word!

Exchanges like this abound in the transcripts, even when I am present with the students. I fell into the same trap of focusing on the “right answer” for labeling the processes, at the expense of talking about the text’s “big idea.” Even when the talk about language was complicated, we failed to connect our talk to the character’s changing traits, which was the focus of the story (Toto, Day 3):

Mustafa: (reading text segment) **It was good to be back home, Toto thought.. con-, con-teen-iatly... .. Gimme a green... .. Some's easy.**  
[Some]

T: [Yup?] Good... .. [Um]

Mustafa: [This] could be a sensing, cuz he's thinking...

T: What do you think, Asil?

Asil: Um

Mustafa: It's, it could be a saying or a [sensing.]

Asil: [Wait.] Wait... .. Talking? [No,] =

Mustafa: [No]

Asil: = saying,  
[saying.]

Mustafa: [Saying.]

Asil: Yeah.

T: What do you think? Saying, you think?

Asil: Yeah.

T: Is he saying anything out loud? What does it say?

Asil: He... [Tutu saw]

Mustafa: [It's sensing.]

T: "Toto thought." Where [does] =

Asil: [Uh]

T: = thinking happen?... Can you picture it or  
is it in someone's head?...

Asil: Um... ..

T: When you think something, can I see you thinking it?

Asil: No.

T: Where is it happening?

Asil: In your head.

T: Yeah. So we know it's gonna be, one of the [green ones.]

Mustafa: [It'ssssss] sensing.

T: Yeah, it's a sensing.

This kind of talk resembles worksheet-like thinking. We are trying to accurately label each item and move on, forgetting to consider what that means for the text. There was no meaningful thrust behind examining the *processes* in this text, which caused the work to become a hollow exercise. That is not to say this wasn't useful work as a step in the process, but since I failed to take it further and connect it to meaning (either that day or later in the unit), its usefulness for fostering a rich TBD was somewhat squandered.

The work we did on *Toto* is an additional example of the importance of prompts and their relationship with the analysis. The persuasive prompt was “Who changed more: Suku or Toto?” Thus, our analysis focused on the two characters, and I chose to analyze the *processes* they were engaged in. The analysis went smoothly, but didn't end up being meaningful. Partway through the initial reading, one of the students predicted a different persuasive prompt: “Will Suku go out with the herd boys now?”<sup>59</sup> If that had been the prompt, the entire analysis would have focused on Suku, and a look at his *processes* could have been rooted in what he was externally doing and saying versus what was going on internally for him. This would have been a meaningful way to explore the idea of bravery, how the *processes* work together to show conflicting ideas about Suku, and to support students in an assessment of what Suku would do after this experience. Toto (the character) ended up being a distraction that prevented this talk about the metalanguage. The change in prompt would not have changed a lot about the analysis we would do (aside from

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<sup>59</sup> This was something he was afraid to do at the beginning of the story.



eliminating Toto's segments) but would have greatly enhanced the potential for exploring how authors use the different types of *processes* when writing about a character.

### **Summary and Discussion of Results**

The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” The results in this chapter show the variety of FGA metalanguage that can be used with texts, how its use helped students engage in different ways with the text, and how it presented unique challenges for teaching. Here I summarize these results and discuss what they mean for the research questions in terms of affordance and challenges.

#### **Affordances of FGA metalanguage**

My analysis of the data show that examining language helped students construct meaning from text. The use of the *connector* “but” helped students detect shifting emotions in a character; the juxtaposing of the *participants* in a text helped students track shifting power dynamics between them; the examination of the characters’ *processes* cued students to consider what was implied about the character’s thoughts and feelings; and examining *polarity* and *force* helped students to see how language causes us to make inferences. These results show that the language features of a text can provide students with an entrée into text analysis.

Duke and Carlisle (2011) define comprehension as “the act of constructing meaning with oral or written text” (p. 200) and note that the text, the reader, and the context all play a part in this construction (citing the RAND model, 2002). Previous research on different TBDs have

shown that students can respond to text aesthetically (Certo, Moxley, Reffitt, & Miller, 2010; McMahon, Pardo, & Raphael, 1991; Raphael & MacMahon, 1994; Raphael, McMahon, Goatley, Bentley, Boyd, & Pardo, 1992), with connections to background knowledge and experiences (Goldenberg, 1993; Goldenberg & Patthey-Chavez, 1995; Saunders, Patthey-Chavez, & Goldenberg, 1997; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), with questions and confusions (Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996; McKeown, Beck, & Worthy, 1993; Sandora, Beck, & McKeown, 1999), and through argumentation (Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Waggoner, Chinn, & Anderson, 1996). All of these responses can help to support the construction of meaning from text.

FGA, however, offers an additional means for supporting text comprehension that can be used alone, or in tandem with these approaches. Asking subgroups of students to focus intently on certain text segments and their language offers something new to TBDs. Its constructs, terminology, and metalanguage give this activity structure that is missing when we simply ask students to reread or examine the text, and it offers explicit guidance in what to notice about language. In this way, it echoes earlier comprehension research on strategy instruction, in which the reading behaviors of strong readers were identified, and then concretized through instruction into strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; Wilkinson & Son, 2011); it helps readers who might not notice the important language features gain access to text analysis. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) offers a way of identifying linguistic structures—through its terminology and metalanguage—that convey meaning if readers/listeners are aware of the structures, even passively. FGA offers a means of instructing students about these structures and scaffolding their work with them through its version of the terminology and metalanguage, and through its pedagogical features (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press;

Schleppegrell, 2004, 2013). Just as strategy work gave teachers tools beyond asking students to “read carefully” by defining what careful reading was, FGA work can provide teachers with tools beyond asking students to “reread for what’s important” by drawing attention to language features chronically present in the important parts.<sup>60</sup> In this way, FGA seeks to help students who may not have developed this language awareness, for whatever reason, by instructing them in it, which is a crucial part of comprehension development (Duke & Carlisle, 2011).

This approach offers explicit instruction in academic language, concurrent with the study of content; these two areas have been in tension in ELL instruction (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a). It addresses a paradox that other researchers have noticed in the research on the discursive approaches to comprehension instruction: though discussing text can enhance understanding of the text, discussing text also requires some understanding the text. Sandora, Beck, and McKeown (1999) describe the challenge in this relationship between comprehension and discussion:

One factor that may make it difficult to launch meaningful discussions is initiating discussion after students have read an entire selection on their own, a common approach in many classrooms. Although the point of prompting discussion is to encourage active processing of text material, asking students to take in a complete text on their own may work against engaging students’ active efforts... Initiating discussion after a text is read seems to assume a successful, active reading of the text. It assumes either that students have been able to make sense of the text on their own, or, if not, that they are able to hold in memory all the pieces necessary to explore and integrate the work so that they can make sense of it in the discussion, or that they can articulate difficulties they encountered with the text. Our experiences suggest that students often have difficulty making sense of texts on their own, and that their difficulty, rather than motivating an active questioning attitude, leads to disengagement with the reading process. (p. 181)

These researchers address this issue through the Questioning the Author (QtA) approach to TBDs, in which the discussion occurs in tandem with the reading of the text, with multiple stopping points to assess understanding and think critically about the text. The FGA-supported

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<sup>60</sup> Please note that the “importance” of a part is dependent on the instructional goal.

TBD, on the other hand, addresses this issue through a return to the most important segments of the text (in terms of relevance to the “big idea” and prompt) and the use of language analysis to support them in constructing meaning from these segments.

The results from this study are some of the first examinations of FGA being used in this context. Achugar and Carpenter (2012) engaged in somewhat similar work in which students analyzed segments of text using FGA metalanguage, but this work was done in secondary level history classes with primary source material. Nonetheless, their work was similarly rooted: “Creating opportunities to look closely at texts and analyze how meanings are constructed made visible the strategies expert readers use when approaching historical texts and started to provide a metalanguage to develop strategies to learn from text” (p. 267). Functional Grammar scholars encourage wider application. Gebhard, Shin, and Seger (2011) offer examples of research on FGA being done in North America, but assert that it isn’t enough, particularly considering the language diversity in these countries. Walker (2010) challenges the academy to widen socio-cultural approaches to bilingual education by considering what SFL techniques (such as FGA) can offer as far as assessing student understanding and informing teaching techniques, supporting both applications with Vygotskian notions. SFL, Walker explains, was developed as a tool to address teaching problems and is far more specific than any other ways language has been described with respect to assisting in bilingual education settings.

If we consider FGA a scaffold for TBDs, it is helpful to frame the metalanguage (and associated terminology) as a nested scaffold. Recent work coming out of the *Language & Meaning* research group (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press; Schleppegrell, 2013) focused on FGA used in the same realm of instruction—elementary English Language Arts—and examined

the metalanguage, participation structures, and classroom artifacts<sup>61</sup> for organizing the work as different tools for supporting rich discussions of text, careful attention to language, and successful student writing. What is emphasized in this work is that FGA's pedagogical norms and the metalanguage it uses are means to an end, not content to be explored for its own sake:

These episodes illustrate how interaction and talk about language, using a meaning-based grammatical metalanguage, can support academic language development and achievement of curricular goals in the ELA classroom. Students are not just learning labels but are learning to use grammatical metalanguage to make meaning in discussions about texts, engaging with the language of the author in interaction with each other. This work helps students rehearse interpretations of the texts, and articulating how they know what they are asserting helps them make text-based claims and support them. (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press, p.12)

This goal for the use of FGA—to support academic language development and content area learning—roots evaluations of its use and framed my evaluation of the success of the metalanguage for supporting each of these units. There were cases in which I felt I fumbled with the metalanguage, and there was a case where I felt I failed to use the metalanguage to lead us back to the content. In essence, FGA's role as a scaffold for the TBD--and the metalanguage, participation structures, and artifacts produced in this work as scaffolds nested within that scaffold—is what this dissertation study is promoting and what I was evaluating.

Because this specific use of FGA is novel, and there aren't similar studies of its use with TBDs to offer a comparison, it is beneficial to root the study's results in theory, specifically in a consideration of how the FGA and its metalanguage work as a scaffolding tools and how they work with this study's subscribed model of reading comprehension. Theoretically framing FGA and its metalanguage as scaffolding tools helps to justify *why* this line of inquiry is important; theoretically framing how to make instructional decisions about the language features to capitalize on helps to justify *how* to design and carry out this instruction.

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<sup>61</sup> By artifacts, the researchers were referring to charts and worksheets students did as they worked with text.

This teaching experiment was motivated by the hypothesis that using FGA can assist students who are confused by the text's language, helping them gain access through controlled, but challenging, exercises. Such examinations of the language might help these students to construct meanings that they were unable to construct independently. In this way, the FGA enhances the scaffolding work the teacher does as she guides students through text. The FGA metalanguage, in turn, scaffolds these examinations of language. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) described six criteria for an "expert" to successfully scaffold problem-solving with a student. We can consider how FGA and its metalanguage helps us scaffold students within this model if we define the problem being solved as "What does this text mean?"

The first criterion is *recruitment*, in which the expert must "enlist the problem-solver's interest in and adherence to the requirements of the task" (p. 98). FGA provides a means for recruitment. The analysis involves searching for examples of focal language features (often highlighting or listing them), or studying identified examples closely to answer a question. This is a more interesting and defined task than asking students to reread. For example, when students highlighted examples of *turned up/down* language in *Marven of the Great North Woods*, they were excited to hunt for examples. When they looked at the segments that were divided by the *connector* "but" in *La Bamba*, they became adept at noting how Manuel felt "before the but" or "after the but." The tasks were clear and engaging.

The second criterion is *reduction of degrees of freedom*, in which the expert simplifies the task. The FGA metalanguage reduces degrees of freedom by defining meaningful text features of interest. This is an easier task than asking students to independently decide what is important in the text. For example, when students were asked to determine what Dr. Johnson was thinking in *The New Doctor*, their segments had highlighted words and actions for them to

focus on. This cued them as to where they should be constructing inferences, making the task easier.

The third criterion is *direction maintenance*, in which the expert “has the role of keeping them in pursuit of a particular objective” (p. 98). Multiple FGA constructs are often present in multiple ways in a text segment. Therefore, students are rarely “done” with analysis, and have room to challenge themselves. For example, students sometimes finished their assigned segments and then asked for a “bonus segment” or eavesdropped and chimed in on other groups. Additionally, they sometimes thought they were done with a segment, and I cued them to look for/at another example of the language feature we were working with. Students stayed engaged with the task of analyzing language in different ways and within different contexts.

The fourth criterion is *marking critical features*, in which the expert “marks or accentuates certain features of the task that are relevant” (p. 98). FGA guides teachers in selecting, or “marking,” the most important text segments, the metalanguage helps us discuss these selections explicitly, and during analysis the metalanguage allows us to highlight what we are noticing in the language. FGA directs our attention, rather than students looking at a piece of language just because the teacher finds it important. The metalanguage helps us discuss that piece of language. For example, discussing the wind as a chronic *participant* in *McBroom and the Big Wind* allowed me to justify an examination of the wind’s relationship with the McBrooms, rather than just viewing it as a weather occurrence that caused them problems. In the concluding paragraph of *La Bamba*, students sensed resolution, but the presence of the *connector* “but” allowed me prompt them to look for still more conflict in Manuel’s mind. Highlighting *turned up/down* language helped me draw attention to easily-overlooked passages

of *Marven of the Great North Woods*. FGA drew attention to specific segments of the text and the metalanguage helped me discuss that with students.

The fifth criterion is *frustration control*. The FGA metalanguage allows us to discuss language in concrete ways, even when we are discussing subtleties. This helps students understand how the language realizes meaning, even when they don't easily pick up on the nuances of certain wording. For example, in *La Bamba* the *connector* "but" cued students to look for emotional dissonance in Manuel, and its role in dividing two feelings structured the task. This was easier than asking them to search for examples of Manuel's mixed feelings. When we searched for *turned up/down* language in *Marven of the Great North Woods*, students didn't need to search exhaustively for subtle examples, but could identify one to three clear examples of such language in their segments. The ubiquity of language realizing meaning means an array of example are available that make up a range of difficulty.

The sixth criterion is *demonstration*, in which the expert models a task or finishes a task that the student has begun. The metalanguage allows teachers to name the language features they are focusing on, so their thinking is explicit. For example, I was able to call both McBroom and the wind *participants*, which put them on equal footing for comparison. When we worked on *Marven of the Great North Woods*, I was able to demonstrate how the author could have phrased information in simpler ways, and then label his more complex language as *turned up/down*, which connected it to the realization of meaning. The language wasn't just "more interesting" or "colorful"; it underscored an idea. These labels allow us to talk about our thinking about language when we model.

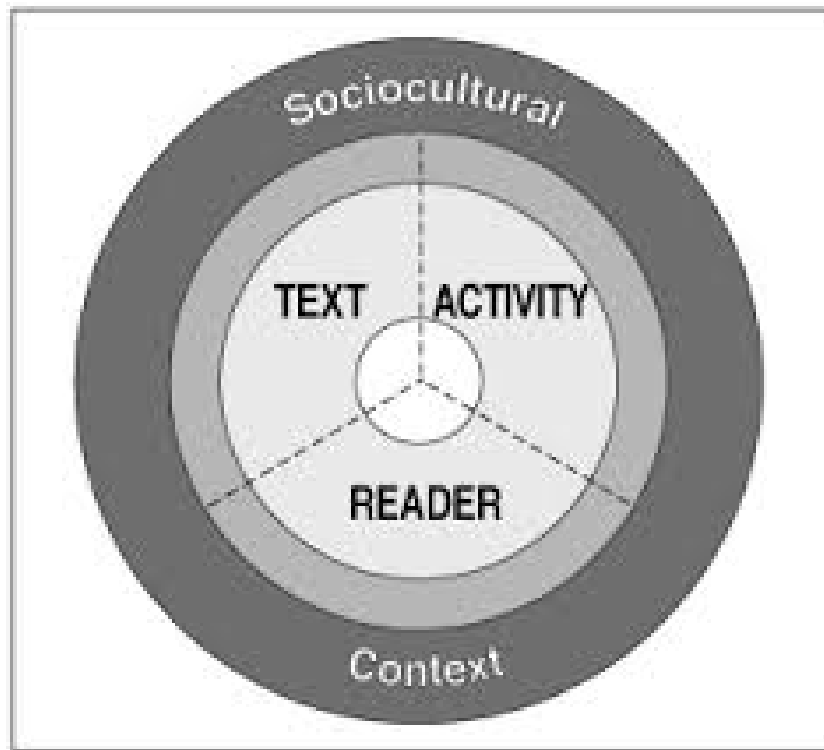
Thus, if teachers serve as "experts" who scaffold the meaning-making process for students, we can view FGA and its metalanguage as a menu of tools to facilitate our scaffolding



role. The metalanguage allows us to clarify and define our expert analysis of text such that students can follow our thought processes and appropriate them for themselves. As Moore and Schleppegrell (in press) say, “Students’ use of meaning-focused grammatical metalanguage during group work positions them to participate in whole-class conversations in richer ways” (p. 12). This is not a completely novel proposition. Gebhard, Shin, and Seger (2011), for example, explain that “SFL scholars have coupled Halliday and Martin’s perspectives of SFL and Vygotsky’s concepts of appropriation and mediation in developing and researching approaches to designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment tools for classroom use” (p. 283). Furthermore, the use of FGA and its metalanguage as scaffolds can help students feel competent at constructing meaning out from the text segments, which is important for increasing motivation for reading (Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden, 2013).

It also helps to think about how the decisions for using certain language features mesh with the RAND model of reading comprehension (see *Figure 6.7*). In this model, the text, the activity, and the reader exist in relationship, with no element being more important than the other to the comprehension process. Encompassing the whole relationship is the sociocultural context in which the reading is taking place.

Figure 6.7 RAND model of reading comprehension (RAND, 2002, p. xiv)



I concluded in Chapter 4 that during the planning of an FGA-supported TBD, choosing the appropriate language feature required that it be *prevalent* in the text, *accessible* to students, and *salient* to the “big idea.” These conditions relate to the RAND model in the following ways: Consideration of the text includes its language features. Teachers need to be able to identify, define, and talk about the features that are *prevalent* in the text. Consideration of the reader includes her metalinguistic awareness. Teachers need to adjust their instruction according to students’ familiarity with the FGA constructs and its related metalanguage to make it *accessible* for students. Consideration of the activity in these units includes the language analysis of the text segments. Teachers need to make this analysis *salient* to the text’s “big idea.” Considering the use of FGA and its metalanguage within this model illustrates how it can theoretically

support comprehension, as well as how it can undermine comprehension if one of these elements is ill-structured.

In summary, if FGA can assist ELLs with the reading of text in a meaning-based way and better prepare them to make the most use of a discursive format of comprehension work in the classroom, it should be positioned as a unique and powerful way to help teachers scaffold their instruction. I believe that this work is theoretically grounded, timely, and pedagogically rich.

### **Challenges of FGA metalanguage**

Working with the metalanguage also presented challenges in each unit. *La Bamba* went smoothly, but mainly due to the multiple iterations that informed its final design. During *McBroom and the Big Wind* and *The New Doctor*, I struggled to properly define the terminology (which led to neglecting explicit metalanguage), and I realized problematic aspects of the prompts I was using. During *Marven of the Great North Woods*, I successfully defined the terminology with the students, but still struggled to speak accurately about different aspects of it when the analyses grew more nuanced. During *Toto*, there was a lack of connection between the analyses and the “big idea.”

There are two clear challenges that kept appearing in this work—talking in accurate ways about the FGA terminology and connecting the work with language features to the instructional goals of the unit—that I assert are due to the fact that FGA introduces a parallel stream of content into the instruction. Therefore, along with helping students work on understanding the content of the text, we are also helping students work on understanding the FGA metalanguage we are using to explore the text’s content. Explaining, exemplifying, and using the metalanguage in clear and productive ways requires instructional choices, just as the choice of a “big idea” or persuasive prompt influences our framing of the text’s content.

As teachers, we make these instructional choices when we design lessons and when we make moves during enactments, and these choices are influenced by our pedagogical content knowledge (PCK; Shulman, 1986). PCK is a theory that tries to capture the knowledge of good teachers, and challenges the idea that successful teachers have a lot of knowledge about their subject areas and a lot of knowledge about general pedagogy. Instead, PCK is a gestalt of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical design in which decisions about the content and decisions about the mode of instruction are made in relationship:

PCK exists at the intersection of content and pedagogy. Thus it does not refer to a simple consideration of both content and pedagogy, together but in isolation; but rather to an amalgam of content and pedagogy thus enabling transformation of content into pedagogically powerful forms. PCK represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular aspects of subject matter are organized, adapted, and represented for instruction. (Koehler, 2011, para. 3)

Thus, designing and enacting FGA-supported TBDs drew on my PCK for both streams of content: the content of the text and the content of FGA.

Therefore, the results in this chapter need to be contextualized in two ways. First, this instruction was done by a novice with FGA. I am not a linguist, even in the realm of traditional linguistics. I have studied FGA for several years through research groups, classes, and dissertation research, but that in no way compares to the expertise of the linguistic theorists who developed it and the researchers who have studied and applied it for decades. This novice status affected my understanding of the FGA constructs and use of the metalanguage, and my instincts and confidence when I encountered teaching dilemmas during these units. This context is not a barrier, however. I often found myself—in memos and in my own mind—blaming myself for some of the missteps in this work because I lacked linguistic expertise. After some temporal distance from the enactments and through immersing myself in writing this dissertation, however, I realize that we can't expect teachers to be linguists, and that my struggles to do this

work are the same struggles that a typical teacher would face. Schleppegrell (2013) notes that teachers sometimes renamed certain constructs in ways they felt more comfortable working with. And this novice use does not negate the benefits of the work. Moore & Schleppegrell (in press) note that “the SFL metalanguage can be challenging, but we have seen that even where teachers are struggling with it, the dialog about language helps students talk about meaning” (p. 13). That said, we cannot neglect the need to build up knowledge about FGA content. It is inherently part of the work if we want to improve. Just as Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) assert that “teachers who wish to do instructional conversations must thoroughly study the intellectual substance of what is being taught through the conversations” (p. 71), I assert that teachers who wish to support students with FGA must thoroughly study the metalanguage they are using to structure analysis. Otherwise, we will be just as “hobbled” as the teacher candidates Kucan and colleagues (2007) describe who “attempt to teach text-based discussions about content for which their understanding is too lean” (pp. 2912-2913).

Second, the PCK with respect to FGA in the realm of TBDs, with narrative text, with elementary school students, in North America, is less-defined with each modifier. Teachers and researchers have used FGA to support writing in the content areas with students in New Zealand to the extent that there are curricula to support the work, but no such literature or curriculum exists for using FGA the way it was used in this study. This, however, should not be viewed as a barrier either because all new practice is exploratory at first. When Tharp and Gallimore (1988) described their work to create a new way of schooling that was rooted in student talk and an honoring of students’ identities, it too involved many iterations, adjustments, and corrections. They designed the pedagogy and curricula by doing the work of teaching in reflective and iterative ways. High-quality instruction grew out of this work, most notably, ICS. The beginning

steps of taking FGA into the elementary English Language Arts realm (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press; Schleppegrell, 2013; and this dissertation study) in reflective, iterative ways may prove just as fruitful.

With these contexts in mind that remind me of the limited PCK I had to draw on during this teaching experiment, the wisest way to discuss the specific challenges described in the results is in terms of recurring dilemmas. Exploring the dilemmas I wrestled with across the endeavor is more fruitful than micro-analysis of the individual units, for two reasons. First of all, the challenges described in the results fit into larger dilemmas for practice, so exploration of these dilemmas will speak to those specific challenges, but in a broader way. Secondly, speaking of dilemmas does not imply inherent flaws in the approach. The fact that I struggled with something does not mean it is an inherent struggle of working with FGA and its metalanguage; rather, it could be my novice knowledge that presented the challenge, or the still-developing relationship between the FGA content and the instructional approach of a TBD. These dilemmas are informative for the development of PCK for teachers who might work with FGA in this way, but with different texts and students.

When I analyzed my post-enactment memos, which reflect on my experiences as a novice teacher of FGA in the context of TBDs, I identified two recurring dilemmas: how to define and illustrate the FGA constructs through metalanguage and how to continuously connect the FGA to my instructional goals for the text. I will now describe both of these dilemmas, and then discuss their implications for FGA-supported TBDs.

**Defining and illustrating the metalanguage.** A recurring dilemma in this work was defining and illustrating FGA constructs through metalanguage. On the one hand, one might think that introducing too much complex terminology at once could be overwhelming for

students, and difficult to make meaningful within a single text study. However, trying to introduce just one term at a time also proved extremely challenging because the terminology works together to describe how a text means what it does.

Defining a term outside of the other terminology it works with can be challenging. For example, during the work on *participants* with *McBroom and the Big Wind*, my definition of a *participant* became inconsistent, misleading, and conflated with the literary practice I was also focusing on. Similarly, during the work on *processes* with *The New Doctor*, defining *doing* and *saying processes* without discussing *sensing* and *being processes*, and defining a *process* in and of itself was so challenging, I ended up abandoning it as an explicit focus. In this case, trying to “wade into” a complex set of terms like *processes* seemed to lead to a watered-down presentation of them that the students did not take up. In contrast, the lengthy instructional presentation of all four *process* types in the *Toto* unit was successful, and students were able to analyze the processes in the text.

However, that is not to say that *all* terminology faces this challenge. Even though these examples seem to imply that introducing more terminology at once is wiser, the FGA focus for *La Bamba* serves as a counter-example. In *La Bamba* I focused on a very specific and isolated FGA construct—*connectors*—and it was very successful. Perhaps this is because *connectors* have a meaningful function in and of themselves and can more easily be discussed apart from other constructs. Perhaps this is because there are not nearly as many words that serve as *connectors* and I focused on one in particular. This is important, however, because I am not concluding that more terminology is always better when planning an FGA-supported TBD unit. I am saying that deciding how much terminology to work with at one time depends on its relationship to other terminology, and is an area for careful consideration.

Similar dilemmas exist in other educational realms. In mathematics, people debate whether to talk about fractions and decimal numbers at the same time, or in separate units of study. Similarly, it could be beneficial or cumbersome to talk about a certain bodily system (i.e., the circulatory system) in tandem with a complementary bodily system (i.e., the respiratory system). We need to learn things in pieces manageable enough to not cause cognitive overload, but we also need to keep their relationships in mind. Sometimes narrowing in on nested content is helpful, as when students learn about cellular structure after learning about larger biological systems. Sometimes widening the view to account for larger contexts is helpful, as when students learn about the global context surrounding a country's political revolution.

As more work is done applying FGA to similar contexts, we may find that a “scope and sequence” begins to develop. It need not be a prescriptive tool as much as a helpful guide. For example, in the *Language & Meaning* research group, we began working on the basic metalanguage of a sentence—the *participants*, *processes*, and *circumstances*—as a foundational understanding from which to launch further explorations of FGA metalanguage. Moore & Schleppegrell (in press) are on the way to developing an FGA curriculum that meshes well with a certain content-area task: character analysis.

Illustrating the language features for student can also be challenging. As far back as during my work with the *Language & Meaning* research group, a debate existed regarding the mode for illustrating new language features for students and whether to use authentic or contrived example text. Using authentic text, especially familiar text, shows how the language works in sentences that are already meaningful to students, and shows how language works in complex and nuanced ways. Using contrived examples, however, allows teachers to isolate



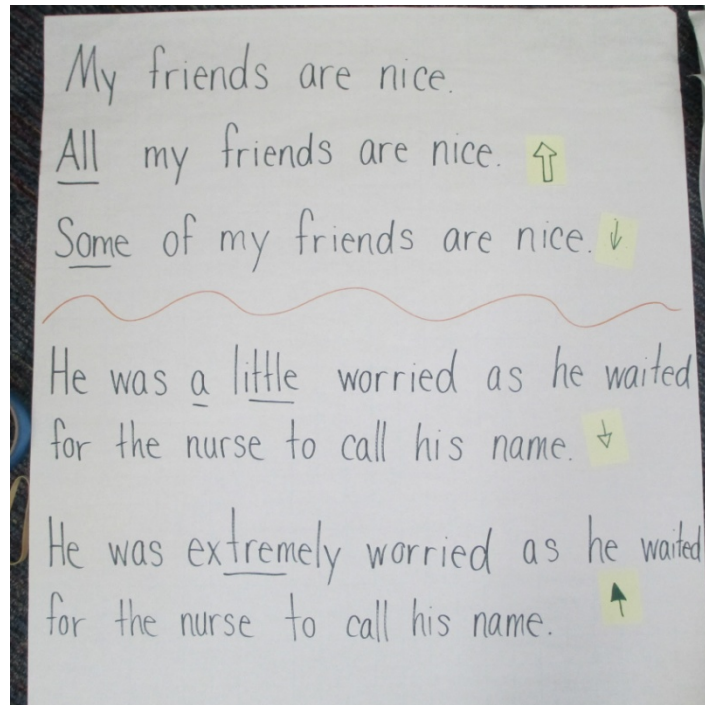
certain focal language features more easily and to gradually build up to progressively more complex examples.

In most of the units, I made at least some use of contrived text that I wrote to tidily exemplify the language feature I was introducing to students. For example, when we discussed *turned-up/down* language, I had written examples that we discussed as a group (see *Figures 6.5 and 6.8*). The benefits of using contrived sentences in this unit were that I could illustrate a wide array of examples,<sup>62</sup> the examples were written to minimize ambiguity during the initial exposure to the metalanguage, and the examples were posted as ongoing references for future work in the unit and later units. Some problems with using the contrived sentences were that they were sometimes distracting and provoked off-task talk, they were occasionally less clear than I had anticipated because students didn't share the context that I had in mind when writing them, and they were less helpful for working with the metalanguage in the more ambiguous context of authentic text.

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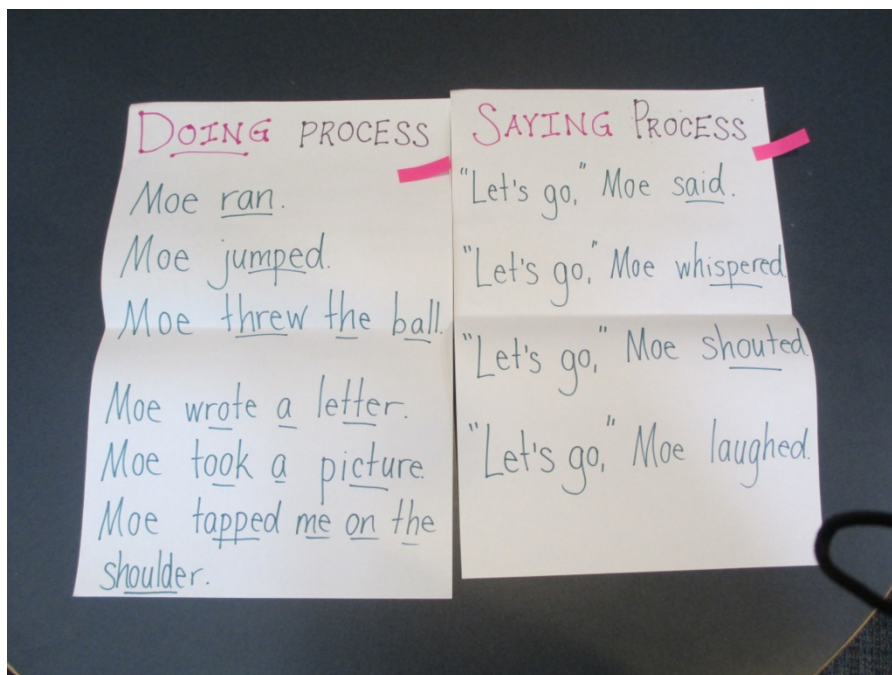
<sup>62</sup> *Figure 6.8* shows one of six pages of contrived text that we worked with.

Figure 6.8 Contrived sentences illustrating turned-up/down language



The work we did on the four different *processes* also made use of contrived sentences (see *Figure 6.9*) and posed exactly the same benefits and problems.

Figure 6.9 Contrived sentences illustrating doing and saying processes



I had an additional limitation worth noting with respect to this dilemma. Since I had not worked with these students outside of this study, we did not have a myriad of texts we had shared together with which to illustrate the metalanguage. As the units progressed, I could have chosen to pull my illustrative sentences from texts used in previous units, but my limited choices of texts further complicated the challenges of that choice in that finding good examples in a limited pool could have led to cumbersome, overly-complicated examples. That said, there were times when we referenced previous texts as we worked with new language features. One example is when we went back to sentences from *The New Doctor* segments during the *Toto* unit to reinforce how *doing* and *saying processes* can show us things about a character. Another example is the way we referenced *La Bamba* when we encountered or used the *connector* “but” as a cue for juxtaposed ideas.

Reading and writing instruction often makes use of mentor texts (Calkins, 1994, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). These are texts that the teacher and students have worked with often, and for specific purposes. Simply naming a mentor text can bring up a range of ideas for students because it serves as a touchstone for different reading and writing concepts. These relationships between a text and a concept have been reified in teacher guides or methods texts, but they originally developed organically, through text analysis. Someone realized that Chris Van Allsburg’s *The Stranger* (1986) was a helpful text for working on inferencing with students, or that Kevin Henke’s *Chrysanthemum* (1991) was a helpful text for teaching students to write characters’ different voices. There is nothing that says these texts are *only* useful for these lessons, nor that these lessons can *only* be taught using these texts. However, finding a match between the content and the mentor text is not random, but rather

based on the features of the text and the content we wish to work on with student. Duke and Pearson (2002) call this “choosing well-suited texts” (p. 211).

As more work is done, it is entirely plausible for FGA to develop a helpful body of mentor texts. In our work in the *Language & Meaning* research group, Patricia Polacco’s *Thundercake* (1990) became a touchstone for talking about *participants* that were not people<sup>63</sup> and for examining *processes* to monitor a character’s fear. *La Bamba* had been a mentor text for a variety of language features as our units went through different iterations. Identifying good matches between texts and language features can be guided by the conditions I described in Chapter 4: *prevalence, salience, and accessibility*.

**Connecting the metalanguage to the instructional goals.** Another dilemma concerns building strong connections between the students’ analysis work and the learning goals for the TBD unit. In Chapter 4, I described how the text, the language features, and the “big idea” worked in relationship during the planning process, each informing the other and resulting in multiple iterations of units. In spite of this planning work, it was still challenging to keep this connection explicit during the enactments.

Basically, what we need is instruction with coherence between our metalanguage and our talk about the texts. The more successful lessons showed coherence between the “big idea” and the FGA activities. A good example is how the *connector* “but” and its signifying of change or juxtaposition in *La Bamba* was coherent with the “big idea” of Manuel’s conflicting and changing feelings. Another is how analyzing the way *turned up/down* language realized Marven’s feelings kept us focused on the “big idea” of his emotional reaction to his new home. The less successful lessons showed a lack of such coherence. In *Toto*, the labeling of the different *process* types did not connect to the characters’ changing traits, making the exercise

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<sup>63</sup> The storm is a participant in the story.

purely linguistic and not informative for the discussion. Other units fell somewhere in between these on the coherence continuum. Colombi (2009) describes a functional approach as a “pedagogy focused on the text in terms of content while attending to how the lexicogrammatical features of the text help in the very realization of textual content” (p. 43). If we talk about the language features without connecting them to meaning, we are not realizing the textual content.

I assert that the persuasive prompt is the nexus where the text, the language feature, and the “big idea” come together. The “big idea” is addressed and explored through discussion of the prompt. We discuss the prompt using evidence from the text as support. The language feature structures the activity that organizes this evidence for discussion. Therefore, it is important to check that the persuasive prompt is coherent with all three elements. In three of the units, we saw how an improved persuasive prompt might have led to better results.

I became aware of this challenge early. In my reflection on *McBroom and the Big Wind*, which was only the second unit and the first to be conducted without pilot work, I grappled with the relationship between FGA constructs, persuasive prompts, and texts’ “big ideas”:

Finding a text that leads to a persuasive prompt with equally supported positions is very challenging. I’m wondering if this choice, though made mindfully for the reasons cited in the proposal, actually narrowed the ways I was able to make use of FGA and/or the weight an FGA focus was given over the prompt focus. Then again, FGA is supposed to support the learning objective, which is delineated in part by the prompt... (ellipses included in original memo; Memo 1.30 & 31.13).

This memo shows a circular thinking I was wrestling with. I seem to be asking, “What is supposed to drive the design, the big idea or the FGA?” The answer, I believe now, is that *both* do. The FGA and the “big idea” must equally drive the work. One does not precede the other, which is why planning was complicated and iterative.

In summary, I encountered challenges in each unit because of the limited PCK I had to draw on for FGA. I struggled to clearly and accurately define the FGA terminology for students,

and I struggled to create coherence between all the elements of the work. But my context is not unlike the context of the North American reading teachers in elementary schools that we would like to see take up this work. We can develop a more robust PCK for these teachers by exploring the instructional dilemmas surrounding FGA and its metalanguage, which are not so different from those of other academic subjects. Through iterative teaching work and by drawing on the PCK in other subject areas, we can develop guidelines for the use FGA in the design and enactment of TBDs, resulting in more robust tools for informing design and practice.

## CHAPTER 7: THE STRUCTURE AND DISCOURSE OF THE TBD

The goal of this teaching experiment was to use Functional Grammar Analysis and its associated pedagogical practices to prepare students for successful text-based discussions. The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” After focusing on the FGA—examining its participation structures and metalanguage in this context—I now turn to the resulting TBDs it was intended to support.

Day 4 of each unit was a text-based discussion (TBD), an instructional context in which students and teachers talk about the text and root their thinking in what the text says. As detailed in the literature review of this dissertation, there are many approaches to TBDs that vary across many dimensions, including proximity to the initial reading, teacher control of the discussion, length, and prompts for discussion. Despite these variances, the goal for all TBDs is rich engagement with the text and student participation in talk that reveals complex thinking. The goals for this instructional approach were the same, and applying the FGA pedagogy gave this TBD its own characteristics.

In this chapter I describe how synthesizing the FGA work resulted in text-based discussions with two stages: a review of the textual evidence and a debate about the persuasive prompt. The description of the second stage provides evidence that these were successful TBDs

through examples of students co-constructing arguments in this context. To add complexity to the characterization, however, I then use four student case studies to juxtapose the profiles of “struggling comprehenders” who complicated my ideas about participation in TBDs.

### **A Two-Staged Text-Based Discussion**

Part of the FGA pedagogy is a return to the whole-group participation structure to allow the smaller groups to share their analyses of the text. This serves to reinforce the thinking of the smaller groups through explaining their rationales, and facilitates the entire group in seeing how the text fits together as a whole. This occurred at the beginning of Day 4, after the pair/threesome work of Days 2 and 3.

Rather than taking the form of a “round robin” reporting out of their work, however, this activity became a part of the TBD, resulting in two distinct TBD stages in all five units. First, we reviewed the pair/threesome work, which served to gather the important segments back together and organize them according to how they served as evidence for different positions on the prompt. Next, we turned to the prompt and students argued their positions through discussion.

#### **Reviewing the Week’s Work: Gathering the Evidence**

The first third to half of the TBD was dedicated to reviewing the text through the analyses that the pairs/threesomes completed during the previous two days. Taking the time to synthesize this work into a meaningful whole was important, and is a key feature of the FGA pedagogy. This review portion was organized in three important ways.

First, as the teacher, I led the review portion even though it was rooted in student work. That is not to say students did not speak about their own work, or that students did not participate in the talk. It was a discussion. However, it was important that the review portion walk us all



through the text again in an organized way, highlighting what was most important, what was confusing, and what the different groups had worked hard to pull from the text. Therefore, rather than pairs/threesomes reporting out on their analyses in a turn-taking fashion, I led the review and cued different pairs/threesomes to speak to their analyses at the moments when that segment was the point of focus. This helped all of the work come together into a powerful gestalt.

Second, all of the record sheets used in the analyses were posted on the walls as some sort of timeline of the story. For example, in the *La Bamba* unit we grouped segments according to headings that read “after volunteering,” “during rehearsal,” “during the show,” and “after the show.” This allowed us to examine Manuel’s feelings during different stages of the narrative, which made exploring his mixed feelings all the more layered and complex. In the *Toto* unit we organized the timeline vertically and with two columns, to serve as a visual for which trait the focal character was exemplifying in each segment. Along the sides we used colored Post-its to indicate “before,” “during,” and “after” the major event, which was Suku saving Toto from the trap (see *Figure 7.1*). This allowed the idea of their changing characteristics through time to become visually evident. These materials were posted in exactly the same way the next day for reference during the writing assignment.

Figure 7.1 A segment of the vertical timeline used for Toto during the review

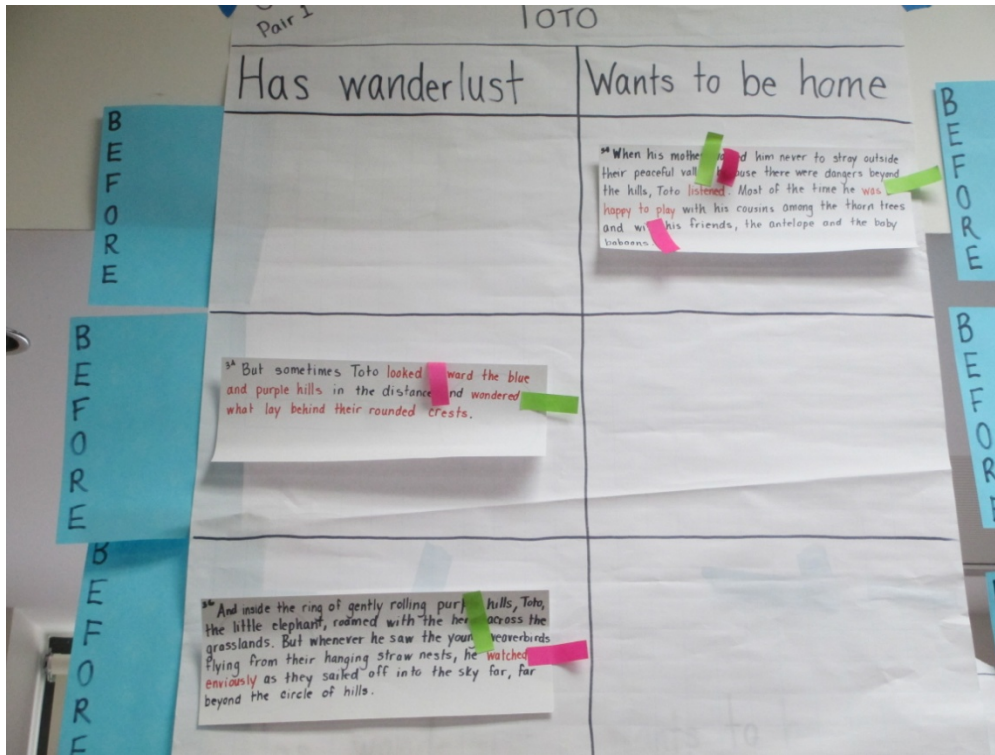
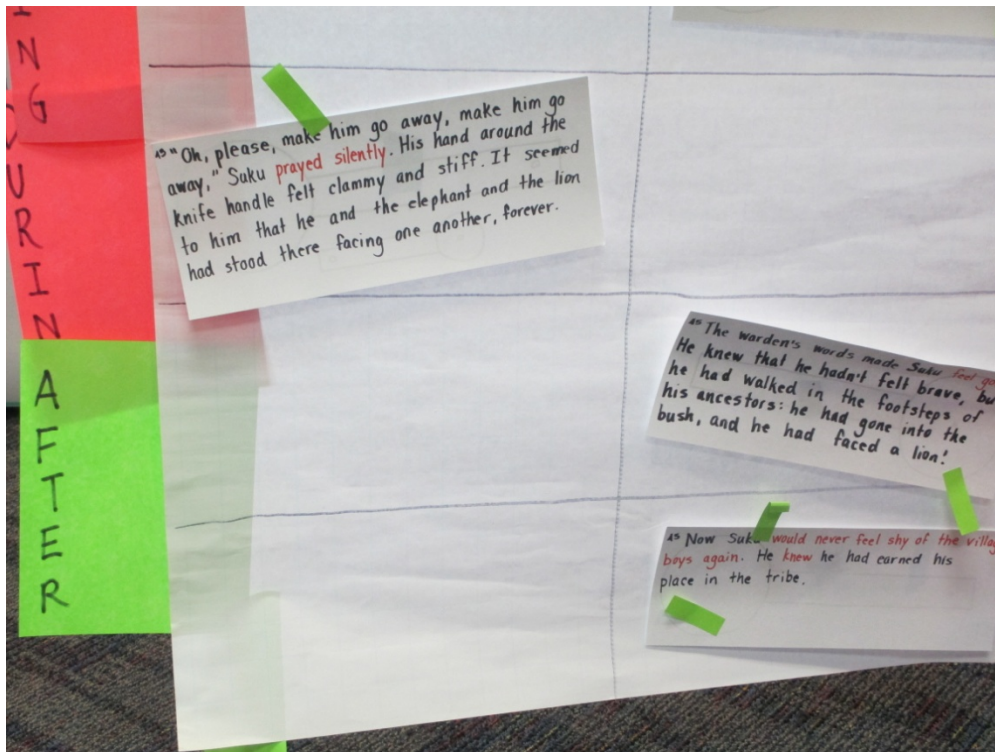


Figure 7.2 A segment of the vertical timeline used for Suku during the review



Third, the review portion was rooted in the text’s “big idea” and persuasive prompt. Although we recapped the story events to assess students’ basic comprehension of the text, the focus of the review was always on why the chosen segments were informative for wrestling with the persuasive prompt. We returned to the question again and again, which supported student use of the text as evidence when we moved into the next stage of the TBD and when they wrote about the text.

These features of the review portion are illustrated in a segment of the review from *La Bamba*. Note that at this stage of Day 4, I was leading the talk, referencing a display of the students’ work, and tying the review to the prompt by exploring Manuel’s motivation for performing (La Bamba, Day 4):

T: Now. Here's an important point. We have to remember through all of this, and to answer the question, why did Manuel volunteer, okay? Cuz right here he's saying, (reading text segment) **He was still amazed that he had volunteered. He was going to pretend to sing Ritchie Valen's La Bamba before the entire school. Why did I raise my hand? he asked himself.** And this group said (reading record sheet) he feels bad because he volunteered because he was really unhappy that he raised his hand, because he's nervous of singing in front the entire school. So he's like, "Why did I do this?" Then we have our important word.

Ali: But.

T: What's that important little word?

Group: But.

T: But. (reading text segment) **But in his heart he knew the answer.** Then does it say Manuel loved singing La Bamba? Manuel loved dancing and pantomiming to La Bamba. He enjoyed it so much. That's why he did this. Is that why Manuel did this?

Farah: No.

T: Farrah, what are you thinking?

Farrah: He did it, he did it because, uh, he wanted the limelight, [limelight.]

T: [He didn't] just want the limelight. He, remember that word?... Y-

Group: Yearned.

T: Yearned. Yearned is like, you want it so bad you need it. (reading text segment) **He yearned for the limelight. He wanted applause as loud as...**

Group: scattered "a thunderstorm."

T: **A thunderstorm and to hear his friends say, Man, that was...**

Group: [scattered "bad."]

Ali: [Awesome.]

T: **Bad!** Yeah. **And he wanted to impress** who?

Group: scattered "the girls"

T: **The girls.**

Farrah: The second girl, the cutest second girl in the class.

T: The second-cutest girl in the class. Now I have a question... Why didn't he just say, "Oh, I'm gonna go to school today and impress Petra Lopez, and all the cool kids?" Why did he, why'd he need the talent show?

Ali: Oh! No, wait, no. [Wait.]

T: [It's okay,] Ali. What are you thinking?

Ali: No, nevermind. Nevermind.

T: Think about it. Why didn't, what it, why didn't he just wake up and say, "Oh, today I'm gonna go to school and impress someone. I'm gonna impress Petra."

Ali: Uh, I'm not sure.

T: What are you thinking, Riad?

Riad: Because he wants to impress other people too.

T: He wants to impress other people too. So, the talent show would be a bigger crowd. Ahlam, what are you thinking?... What if you were Petra, and I was Manuel. And I went up to you in the hallway, just, one day and I said, "Hey, watch me sing La Bamba!" (mimes the dancing) Would you think I was awesome or, what would you think of me?

Ahlam: Um... not that good.

T: Not that good. You'd think I was a little bit...

Ahlam: Weird.

T: Weird. Is that the place to do that?

Group: scattered "no"

T: No, so he thinks he's good at this. He thinks he's good at this and will impress people, but that's not something you can do all the time. You need something like a talent show to help you do it. But what's really important here is he's not doing cuz he loves, to sing La Bamba.

Riad: He's doing it

Farrah: [For the limelight.]

Ali: [He's doing it to impress everyone.]

T: To impress everyone. The limelight. Attention.

These were not reviews filled with low-level recall questions, though some of those were present; rather, these reviews were rich meta-analyses of the pair/threesome work that were important precursors to a more free-form discussion of the prompt that immediately followed. Student work was usually all we looked at, posted on the walls. Students participated in the review portion, but didn't direct the conversation as much as they did during the next stage of the TBD. The talk was centered around the "big idea" and persuasive prompt. This review of the students' analyses and of the text as a whole served to prime their thinking and give them appropriate sources of evidence when we turned our attention exclusively to the prompt.

### **Focusing on the prompt: Taking a position**

The discussion next turned to a focus on the persuasive prompt, which was intended to facilitate the co-construction of arguments, ideally supported with textual evidence. During this stage of the TBD, students talked much more and even when I talked, it was usually rooted in what students had said, with my turns of talk serving to clarify, underscore, probe, or synthesize student contributions. I didn't stand at the front with the posted work anymore, but sat in the circle of desks with students. I cued students to call on each other, instead of waiting for me to decide who should speak next, and sometimes the discussion became even more natural in the way turn-taking took place, without any hand-raising at all. I opened this stage simply; I restated the prompt and asked who in the group had taken a position.

From that launching point students did, in fact, co-construct many arguments. As the transcript excerpts will show, we built up positions with textual evidence, inferences, and text connections, and countered them with the same. Students agreed and disagreed with their peers' contributions, and both responses provoked the use of evidence to support positions.

Students appeared comfortable disagreeing with each other, and this served to prompt them to use textual evidence to support their positions, as in this discussion of *La Bamba* (Day 4):

Mustafa: Maybe, maybe [he, he, he's hilarious] =

Antonio: (to Adel) Michael Jackson.

Mustafa: = and they start becoming his friend  
cuz he's funny. [Why won't you be friends with a funny kid?]

Adel: [Michael Jackson.]

T: Mustafa says something important. He said, [they wanna be] =

Daniyah: [But.]

T: = his friend  
 cuz he's funny. Why wouldn't you wanna be friends with [a funny kid.]

Daniyah: [But, but he]

T: I hear a "but!"

Daniyah: But he wasn't trying to be funny.

T: (big gasp and clap)

Daniyah: [He wasn't]

Mustafa: [But still] they think [he's funny.]

Adel: [Miss, he just,] she just

Antonio: We're having a [debate.]

Daniyah: [It wa-,] they think it was on purpose, it wasn't ...[It wa-,  
 he wasn't trying to, he trying to do something,] =

Antonio: [Yeah.  
 He feels guilty about it.]

Daniyah: = [he thought they, he  
 thought]

Rayanne: [He did it, they think that  
 he did it] [by *inaudible* make them laugh.]

Mustafa: [But he got the limelight.] But he got the limelight.

Daniyah: [Yeah, just because he got attention and the limelight.]

Antonio: [Yeah, he... he feels guilty about] doing it.

Mustafa: [It's] what he wanted, [though.]

Antonio: [Cuz] pe-, people, uh, are thinking that he actually  
 did that on purpose. But he didn't really do it on purpose.

T: So I hear two important points going on here.

Here we saw a debate that ties in the textual theme of Manuel's mixed feelings, as Mustafa defended his position that Manuel would volunteer again by pointing to evidence that he got what he wanted, whereas Daniyah and Antonio complicated that claim by pointing out Manuel's confusion and challenging Mustafa's evidence.

Students also used times when they agreed with each other to pool large amounts of evidence around a particular position, as Farrah and Ali did here (McBroom, Day 5):

T: But, I saw Ali and Farrah when I was explaining, how this situation is, they both said the wind. Why do you say the wind's more powerful, Farrah? If you were the McBrooms, why would you feel like this wind is more powerful than me?

Farrah: Be-, because when, because, when he did all the, um, like, stuff, like taking the bunnies and stuff, it maybe, like, it maybe they'll, he'll take everything and then they won't have nothing left.

T: So there's always that threat that the wind will come so strong sometime, it'll take their whole life, right? The buildings, the topsoil, everything away from them. So they're, you feel like you would always be a little bit scared of the wind? Ali, what were you thinking? Why did you say the wind?

Ali: Um, because, uh, it's not always it's gonna stop. Some might, sometimes it might keep on going. And, plus, it, uh, mostly did the damage. Like, let's say, when he was trying to shoot the bear?

T: [Yeah.]

Ali: [It just] bent it, like, the plan didn't work. And when they, uh... Oh yeah, when he was walking outside, the hole, he broke his leg, and, uh... What was the other one?...

T: The fences? The roof?

Ali: Yeah, the shingles.

T: So you're saying, yeah, the McBrooms outsmart it, but even in the first storm for example, they hold it out, but they go out there and the thing has done all this damage, right? So the wind is still, like, trashing their lives, even though they're managing to overcome it sometimes.



Through this brief discussion, Farrah and Ali pulled together evidence from both of the major storms, and my revoicing of their ideas modeled the elaboration needed to co-construct a powerful argument in favor of the wind's position of power.

Even when students used evidence that was based on their life experience or inferences they were making, it was usually reasonable and other students treated it as valid evidence to agree with or take umbrage with. This occurred in an exchange in which the ethical behavior of doctors became part of the discussion (Doctor, Day 5):

Rayanne: [Uh, I think] she's gonna be, uh, open-minded.

T: Why do you think so?

Rayanne: Because, um, she, she ha-, she can't judge something that she never seen or... uh, seen before.

T: Well, she shouldn't, but we have seen her do it. Do you think she's gonna be different now, after Josefa's birth?

Rayanne: Yeah, she is.

T: Why?

Rayanne: Because, she shakes her hand and says, "I, I have a lot to learn" from

Daniyah: You never know.

Mustafa: But maybe, [maybe she's lying.]

Daniyah: [Maybe she's lying.]

Antonio: Yeah.

T: Yeah, Daniyah just said, maybe she's lying.

Mustafa: I said that.

T: What makes you feel like she's being honest?

Rayanne: Um, because, um, the doctors don't lie.

T: Oh.

Rayanne: I'll kill them.

T: But you feel like she's a mature adult, I know what she's saying. Like, she's a mature adult, she, she, she [wouldn't be a big liar like a little kid might be.

Daniyah: [My doctor lies to me.]

Antonio: [They think that, they don't, they don't lie] to their patients, but maybe to other people.

The debate here drew from the text, but also from inferences about what Dr. Johnson's words meant and how authentic they were. When I pushed Rayanne to elaborate on how her evidence connected to her position, it led us to a bigger conversation about what doctors were capable of with respect to honesty, which was used to evaluate how helpful it was to analyze her words.

It was very exciting when the discussion caused students to change their positions, which showed that the use of evidence and elaboration to build effective arguments was persuasive enough to draw someone onto the other side, as was the case for Ahlam during the discussion of *Marven of the Great North Woods* (Day 4):

T: So those are some thoughts I had about why he maybe would still wanna go home. I'm not saying that's the right answer, cuz I also have reasons why he'd be happy there. But I, I'm just wondering what you guys think of that. Ahlam?

Ahlam: I'm gonna change my mind.

T: You're changing your mind. Tell me why.

Ahlam: Because... Um, it says that, like, usually you'd wanna be with your own religion, not with other people religion, like, the jacks, eat, mil-, like, they eat milk and then they eat steak and bacon and flapjacks altogether. [But] =

T: [Okay.]

Ahlam: = he can't do that because it's, against his religion...

T: You're right. So he's with people that are different religiously from him. How else are the people different from him? That he's with. Alyssa?

Alyssa: They're huge and muscle-y and he's, like a noodle.

T: They're huge and muscle-y and he's like a noodle. I love that.

Ali: I'm muscle-y.

T: How else are they different? Are they huge, muscle-y ten-year-olds?

Ali: Yeah.

Group: scattered "no"

Ali: No, no, fifty.... [*inaudible*]

T: [We don't know exactly] how old.

Riad: Thirty-six.

T: But Marven is not with... his peers. He's not with other kids.

Ali: He's not with his own kind.

Riad: Seventy-nine.

T: So, Ahlam, you made a good point, but it's, I just wanna make you know that it's not just religion. He's with people that are totally different from him, religiously, age-wise, size-wise, even maybe what the [like to do.]

It's nice how Ahlam's "switch" caused us to refine the piece of evidence that she cites as most convincing, expanding it from being about religion to being about the idea of Marven missing a peer group in this new place.

At the end of our final unit, Alyssa and Riad both articulated detailed arguments for opposing positions, which illustrates beautifully what students are capable of when given the opportunity to discuss text, and also the way text serves as grist for discussion (Toto, Day 4):

T: Okay. So who do you, who do you guys think changed more? Alyssa, you have an opinion?

Alyssa: Toto.

T: Why?

Alyssa: Because, um... uh, Suku, um, like he, he did a big thing, but, um, like, I think that... he... he faced so much, like, hard d-, like obstacles, and, and I don't think he would wanna do that every day. I think he just misses how he was, like, doing the women's chores and everything, and, and... plus, even if he did join the group, he would probably, like, go, go back and, j-, and, um, and he would, like forget about it and become shy again.

T: Okay. So Alyssa's saying when he gets back into the routine life, he might go back to the way he was. I'm thinking a little bit, what you're saying is making me think of his father's words, "Courage comes with need." When he goes back, will he need to go out with the herd boys? No, that need will be gone. So maybe, maybe Suku's changed forever, or maybe Suku's just got it in him when he really needs to, you know, but if he doesn't need to, he'll stay a timid person. Riad?

Riad: Um, for the Toto change more and Suku change more, what I would think is really Suku changed more, [for right now.] =

T: [You think Suku.] Okay.

Riad: = Because, um, Toto, he just, he wants to be home in the beginning, then he's wanderlust, then he just goes home again. But, um, but, uh, Suku? He can, like, keeps on going from side to side,<sup>64</sup> and, um, Suku, first, he never wanted to be with the herd boys, but now, he's probably gonna go cuz he knows he's brave enough. And he's good enough to be with them, cuz before, he probably thought, um, "What if I'm not good enough to go with the herd boys, and [what if I] =

T: [Ohh.]

Riad: = do a good job,"

T: Yeah, so Riad's saying, that this might have changed him forever. So, so Alyssa had argued, perhaps... perhaps, just, in this very unusual moment, Suku was showing bravery, and then, Riad is saying, but maybe this moment changed something inside him forever.

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<sup>64</sup> "Side to side" is referring to the column for the two character traits. Riad is saying that Suku keeps oscillating between traits, rather than moving consistently from one to the other. This is an example of how the holistic representation of their work facilitated their use of the evidence.

These are two opposing arguments—both using textual references and inferences to support their positions and elaborating on the connection between that evidence and their positions—argued eloquently right against each other.

What was most encouraging in the transcripts was the presence of co-constructed arguments like this during every text-based discussion. This presence was the objective of this instructional design and the major criterion with which I was assessing the success of the TBD. We hear, in their discourse, the voices of nine-year-old ELLs: they stutter, make jokes, struggle with some vocabulary, and use incorrect grammar at times. But we also hear the voices of people who have thought carefully about a text: they connect ideas, cite important language, explain inferences they have made, and draw conclusions about the text’s message. Ideally, I was looking for arguments that took clear positions on the prompt, supported the positions with textual evidence, and elaborated sufficiently to clearly explain how that piece of textual evidence served to support their position. Although the examples vary in these elements, in their effectiveness, and in their clarity, students clearly understood the task and were working hard to do this meaningful work.

### **The Struggling Readers and the TBDs**

Another way to enrich our understanding of these results is to focus on the participation of different types of students. From the outset of this teaching experiment, I was particularly interested in the participation of struggling readers during these TBDs. Although it has been established that many ELLs face greater challenges with English text than native speakers, the students’ results on the GMRT-4 showed a range of comprehension skill. Of course, the struggling readers in each group also had their own personality traits that made their participation

idiosyncratic, which brought another dimension of participation into the analysis: talkativeness.<sup>65</sup>

Analyzing the participation of talkative struggling readers was different than analyzing the participation of quiet struggling readers.

In this section I will offer examples of students who tested as struggling comprehenders and how they participated in the TBDs. I will use four case studies to compare a pair of struggling readers who are both “talkative” and a pair who are both “quiet,” juxtaposing within each pair the different ways they contributed to the TBDs, and thus how complex participatory behaviors can be. I developed my own descriptions of these students’ participatory behaviors, and then I used parent questionnaires about their language use at home and teacher questionnaires about their class participation to round out and triangulate my descriptions.

### **Adel and Ali: Two “Talkative” Struggling Readers**

Adel and Ali were both very verbal and friendly students, but what was interesting when I coded the transcripts was that many of Ali’s contributions showed shallow and inaccurate thinking about the texts and discussions, whereas many of Adel’s contributions were thoughtful and focused.

**Adel.** Adel was a “struggling comprehender” in group 1 whose raw score on the GMRT4 was 35 and whose ELPA score was 2. Therefore, he was one standard deviation below the mean on the comprehension assessment, and was an ELL who was close to proficient. In my interactions with him, his English was very understandable, but often had grammatical errors with things like noun-verb agreement and preposition choices. His parents told me that he speaks English with his sister, Arabic with a young cousin who lives with them, and both English and Arabic with them. They noted that he speaks both English and Arabic with friends because he

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<sup>65</sup> This idea of “talkative” and “quiet” students was not measured in any formal way. I simply know from seven weeks of working with the students which ones tended to talk often and which ones tended to rarely talk.

has some English-speaking friends and some friends who only speak Arabic. They feel that he “can speak both languages fluently” (Adel’s parent questionnaire). Adel’s teacher told me that that his comprehension is “very good” (Carson teacher questionnaire), despite his score on the comprehension assessment. When he read aloud in the context of this study, he was not fluent and struggled to decode grade-level text.

Adel had an upbeat, friendly, and funny personality. He often told animated stories while the group was getting settled and shared a lot about his personal experiences throughout our meetings. He consistently and enthusiastically participated in our discussion. His teacher had similar experiences with him: “Adel participates all of the time” (Carson teacher questionnaire). When I coded Adel’s contributions to all of the TBDs, three patterns in his participation emerged, which I will describe and illustrate below.

First, Adel monitored his own sense-making and the sense-making of the group. He thought about what others were saying and tried to incorporate their ideas into his own developing understanding of the text and discussion. Sometimes he displayed this processing with small interjections. For example, when we were discussing to whom the pronoun “she” was referring in a segment from *The New Doctor*, Adel offered a logical explanation for figuring it out, even after I had already told the students that the “she” was Dr. Johnson (Doctor, Day 5):

Adel: [Miss?] We know, uh, that Dr. Johnson’s because she doesn't know Manuelita.

T: You're exactly right. You’re exactly right, Adel. We know it's Dr. Johnson because she's asking, "Who is Manuelita?" Would Lupe ask that?

Group: No.

He also noticed when something wasn’t accurate in our written work and wasn’t afraid to suggest corrections (McBroom, Day 5):

Adel: Miss?...

T: Yes, Adel... ..

Adel: You got the second one wrong... The wind, uh, is...

T: Oh, you're right. They, they, it's the family. You're right. Good eye. Could I borrow that black marker for a moment? Thank you, Adel.

Mustafa: Good job, Adel.

Throughout the transcripts one can see Adel annotating our thinking and work in these small ways, but he also monitored the group's sense-making in more important ways. In an example from *McBroom and the Big Wind*, Adel's careful consideration of other's contributions was evident when he added nuance to how we were evaluating the McBroom family's use of the wind to pluck a turkey for them, a hated chore (McBroom, Day 5):

T: Antonio, tell us what you're thinking.

Antonio: Um, the family's more powerful because it's making the wind pluck the [feathers out.]

Adel: [Yeah.]

Mustafa: For them. They're controlling it.

T: Okay.

Antonio: They're controlling the wind.

T: So I hear Antonio saying, they're making the wind do something. Mustafa said they're controlling it. Adel?

Adel: They're not making it. Instead of them doing all the chores, they're smart to let the wind do it.

Adel was pointing out that they can't make the wind do things, but their smart idea allows them to use it, which is a different thing, and an important distinction as we evaluated the shifts in power between the participants. The wind was always stronger than the McBrooms, but how



they used that strength sometimes gave them power. Moreover, as much as he checked our sense-making, Adel was also attentive to his own understanding of the text and discussion. He noticed when something wasn't making sense to him, such as how exactly McBroom breaks his leg at the end of the story (McBroom, Day 4):

Adel: I'm confused

T: You're confused, Adel?

Adel: Yeah, because he walks home, nothing happened. He sits home, he breaks his leg. [*inaudible*]

T: [Well, because] he's not sitting home. He says that la-, let's see what it says. (reading text segment) **That was the howlin', scowlin' all mighty big wind that broke my leg. It had not only pulled up fence posts, but the holes as well. It dropped one of those holes right outside the barn door and I stepped in it.** It doesn't say when he stepped in it, maybe the next day. Maybe the storm was even gone, but, the storm had scattered these holes all over the place, and

Antonio: [He stepped in one.]

Adel: [(stutters)] The storm left? While he left the fence, came and, while they went to see the wind leave, he stepped in the hole.

T: Yeah, it might be right after, the wind was leaving. Or maybe he just stayed home and ate supper, but the next day he went out to his barn, and he fell in the hole. [Did he] =

Adel: [That's weird.]

No one can argue with Adel's final assessment of this farcical story! Adel's self-monitoring also caused him to ask some very important questions that benefitted the whole group, such as his questions about Marven's thoughts when facing the threat of a (supposed) grizzly bear (Marven, Day 4):

T: (reading text segment) **Marven began to tremble, but he knew he must remain still,** here's some turned-up language, **very still. Maybe, Marven thought desperately, the grizzly would think he was a small tree growing in the middle of the lake. He tried very hard to look like a**

**tree. But concentrating on a tr-, being a tree was difficult because Marven kept thinking about... [Who did]**

Mustafa: [Duluth.]

Daniyah: The, in [Duluth his, his, his, his, his]

Antonio: [His family on the, on the train]

T: His family on the train =

Antonio: Platform.

T: = platform, wa-, you know, sending him off and they're all bundled together, his two sis-, his two big sisters, two little sisters, and his mom and dad. (reading record sheet) Marven feels [terrified] =

Mustafa: [Nooo.]

T: = because there is a grizzly bear right in front of him. And he feels lonely, because he wants to see his family again. Good feelings or bad feelings?

Group: Bad.

Adel: But why does, right in the middle, why he thinks of his family?

Adel's question led to an extended discussion about what we want at moments of panic, versus what we want in our day-to-day lives, which was a pivotal consideration regarding the prompt for that unit. The way Adel monitored the sense-making of himself and the group was very helpful.

A second pattern in Adel's contributions was the way he kept the important unit themes in mind throughout the discussion. He excelled at bringing us back to the key ideas of the text, as in this example (La Bamba, Day 4):

T: So, he's not signing up for this talent show, because he... loves singing La Bamba and loves, you know, that, like [that's a hobby of his.]

Adel: [He wants to]

T: Why is he doing this, Adel?

Mustafa: *inaudible*

Adel: Because he wants to tell everyone he's good at doing something.

T: He wants to tell everyone he's good at doing something.

We repeatedly went back to Manuel's motivation for performing, and Adel kept that in mind.

Furthermore, Adel also focused on overarching themes when he expressed his thinking about the stories. For *Toto* he reminded us what it really meant for Suku to be brave (*Toto*, Day 4):

T: But, Adel's making this point that, he's doing something here cuz he knows he has to do it, like his dad said, "Courage comes with need," but if he's trying not to think about it, he's still...

Adel: Scared.

T: He's still scared.

Mustafa: But he's, uh, [trying to, uh, *inaudible*]

Adel: [But he's brave] that he's still doing it.

Sometimes Adel's turns focused on thematic ideas in almost poetic ways, as when he assessed how Suku is able to understand the trapped elephant's fear because he has been fearful himself (*Toto*, Day 4):

Adel: It's because the elephant is like him.

T: Why?

Adel: Because the elephant is, um, right now scared and he, if he was the elephant, he would be scared. He will call for help. So he, he knows he has to help him because he would do the same [thing.]

Mustafa: [He, he] has to do it cuz it's the right thing to do.

Adel: Yeah.

T: He feels it's the right thing to do and, Adel makes a really good point. Sometimes we really know how someone's feeling if we have felt that way. And that elephant is scared and doesn't want [to be alone.]

Adel: [He, he felt his pain.]

In another powerful turn of talk, Adel summarized Marven's whole dilemma about whether to stay or leave his new home in the great north woods (Marven, Day 4):

Adel: But both of the places ha-, uh, has what he love.

A third pattern in Adel's participation was the high value he placed on evidence when constructing arguments, whether the source was a text segment or inferencing based on life experience. He was slow to take a position as he assessed all the evidence we had gathered and his thoughtfulness was evident in the way he evaluated each piece of evidence (McBroom, Day 5):

Adel: [But, see, they're say-... They're saying the wind] helped him. How is helping them, taking their kids and...

T: So, Adel, I was gonna ask. Is anybody here saying the wind's more powerful? Adel, do you think the wind's more powerful? [Tell us why.]

Adel: [In this point, yes.] But the next, um, the other point, McBroom is powerful because he's the one that thought of the

Daniyah: Wind plow.

Adel: Yeah.

Adel also questioned his peers regarding their use of evidence, like when he took umbrage with people saying that "all the lumberjacks" are friends with Marven at the end of the story (Marven, Day 4):

Adel: Um, I disagree with all the people that said, uh, he's, he's friends with all of the lumberjacks.

T: What do you think?

Adel: He only met one.

T: He only met one.

When Adel finally settled on a position, he usually supported it with reasonable evidence.

Sometimes the evidence came from connections he was making between the text and his own life. For example, during the *La Bamba* unit, when we discussed whether or not Manuel would stay “cool” once he had gotten attention from the popular crowd for his performance, Adel explained:

Adel: [Miss, like me.] Last year, mm, at Rosedale. I ha-, I was the famous kid. Everyone used to come by me, stand by me, [and they used to hug me, my f-,] =

Mustafa: [Why you stop being my friend?]

Adel: = [they're my best friend.] =

Rayanne: [That's when you were a baby.]

Adel: = And then, like, I did something, and, uh, b-, just because one kid did not like me, few friend did not like me, and then their friend did not like me, and no one, liked me. And, k-, uh, and then, uh, I said something funny and then I kept on saying it til everyone liked me again, and then I left school and came here.

T: So it sounds like, [what Adel's saying,] =

Antonio: [I wanna do that.]

T: = he's talking about he was cool, and then stuff was happening, and then kids didn't like him, and then he'd just say something funny and kids would like him again. It sounds like being cool isn't very... stable. It doesn't stay the same all the time. It changes a lot, [right?]

Adel: [Yeah.]

Sometimes his evidence was rooted in a sort of logic about life, like when he inferred ideas about Dr. Johnson based on his feelings about human nature. But when I pressed him to connect his thinking to the text, he was able to weave his inferences and the text together to support his position. (Doctor, Day 5):

T: Adel says, no, she's not wanting to [learn more.]

Mustafa: [Yeah, Adel,] why'd you say [that?]

T: [Why]  
do say that, Adel?

Adel: Because, um, if, why would she, if, the whole time she's closed-minded?

T: Mm-hmm.

Adel: Why would right now she want to be [open-minded?]

Mustafa: [Oh, I know why!]

T: Is there anything in what she says, Adel, that [supports what you're thinking?]

Rayanne: [She's just *inaudible*.]

Adel: [No.]

Mustafa: Oooh.

T: Adel's, Adel's saying, she might want her to come to calm her down, but she doesn't want to learn from her yet. Listen to what she says [because I agree with Adel cuz of an important part.]

Adel: [She, she only, if she only] said that, because the, um, the, um, [mother that's] =

Rayanne: [Ohhh!]

Adel: =  
[Josefa] =

T: [Josefa.]

Adel: = wants her. [Because if he has more] =

T: [Listen to Adel.]

Adel: = panic, she, uh, her birth  
won't be that good.

T: So Adel's saying he's, she's only calling Manuelita, because she needs to calm Josefa down. Not cuz she wants to learn. And listen to the words, Adel, and see if you can find the thing I think, is the clue there. Cuz I agree with you. She says, (reading text segment) **Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer.**

Adel: Her words doesn't mean, like, she wants to learn from her.

This shows how Adel was able to use details from the story and his own inferencing based on beliefs about human nature to build his arguments. Sometimes his extended arguments convinced others to join his position, which is what happened when he and Mustafa took different positions on the meaning of the final scene in *The New Doctor* (Doctor, Day 5):

T: [Adel, I have] a question. You're skeptical about it. Do you think she's lying there, or do you think she means it but it's not gonna last?... When she says, "I guess I have a lot to learn," do you feel like she's, just, totally lying to Manuelita, [or do you]

Adel: [She's not] totally lying. She means it, but she's gonna do one step. [And then she's gonna say] =

Mustafa: [Come on, *inaudible*]

Adel: = [*inaudible* I'm,] I'm, I'm already not liking this.

Mustafa: Oh! No, [I'm with him now. I'm with him now.]

T: [Oh! So Adel thinks she'll take one,] okay, hold on, Mustafa. Adel thinks she'll take one step, like maybe [go] =

Antonio: [Oh!]

T: = talk to Manuelita. And then what do you think her reaction's gonna be, you said?

Adel: "I hate this stuff. I'm not, I'm [*inaudible*."]

T: [Oh!] Listen to this. So Adel thinks maybe she'll go learn something and be like, "I hate this stuff." Why do you, what do we know that [makes you think,] =

Antonio: [I, I have proof.]

T: = she's gonna say, "Oh, I hate this stuff"?

Adel: Because um, eh, eh, um, see how Manuelita works hard to make medicine?

T: Yeah.

Adel: She tries her best. And, um, Dr., eh...

T: Johnson.

Adel: Johnson, she buys the medicine. She doesn't work hard =

Antonio: No, she, she

Adel: = she just, um, like [(stutters) takes medi-, uh,] =

Antonio: [*inaudible*]

Adel: = gives people medicine, [and adios, bye.]

T: [Okay.]

Antonio: [Yeah, yeah, she, like it's, she thinks it's] not usual to make it. [(stutters)]

Adel: [See, and if]

Antonio: (stutters) It's proof (gestures at record sheets). Cuz it says she doesn't want to do it.

Adel: [Yeah and if it]

T: [She thinks it's]

Antonio: She thinks it's silly [to make your own medicine.]



Mustafa: [I'm with him now, I'm with him now.] I'm with him.

Antonio: And not learn [*inaudible*]

Adel: [And if] she tries she's gonna be so lazy, "This is too much work, I give up."

Mustafa: [But I, I, I got]

T: [So you think,] okay, I'm gonna come to you, Mustafa. I just wanna sum up what they're saying. So you guys think, even though right here maybe she's thinking, "Oh, maybe I should learn more," her old ways are so strong =

Adel: Yeah.

T: = that, like, even if she tries to learn, she's gonna be, like, ["No, this is not for me."]

Adel's contributions to the TBDs kept us attentive to our ongoing sense-making, focused on important themes, and rooted in evidence-based positions. Despite being a struggling reader and an English language learner, he was able to demonstrate deep and careful thinking about the text and the discussion.

**Ali.** Ali was a "struggling comprehender" in group 2 whose raw score on the GMRT4 was 36 and whose ELPA score was 2. Therefore, he was one standard deviation below the mean on the comprehension assessment, and was an ELL who was close to proficient. In my interactions with him, his English was usually indistinguishable from a native speaker his age, with the occasional exception of particular vocabulary choices. His parents told me that he usually speaks English with his siblings and friends, but speaks both English and Arabic with them. His teacher told me that Ali usually understands what he reads (Kelson teacher questionnaire), despite his score on the comprehension assessment. When he read aloud in the context of this study, he was not fluent and struggled to decode grade-level text.

Ali had a notably social personality; some days he seemed to talk from the moment I picked them up in their classrooms until the moment I sent them back. He consistently volunteered to speak, and spoke even when it was not his turn, which caused some management problems. Any context prompted participation from Ali. His teacher had similar experiences with him: "Ali participates very often during class. He is always willing to share his ideas no matter what subject area we are learning about" (Kelson teacher questionnaire). When I coded Ali's contributions to all of the TBDs, three patterns in his participation emerged, which I will describe and illustrate below.

First, Ali spoke reactively, without thinking about what he wanted to say first. When I posed a question to the group, Ali was quick to respond. For example, he almost always took an immediate position on the prompt, but expressed it without elaboration, simply calling out an immediate "Yes" or "No way" or the like. Even when I was just reminding students of the prompt in the following example, not soliciting positions yet, Ali chimed in immediately with his answer (La Bamba, Day 4):

- T: Okay, so tomorrow, is the big day when you guys are going to write your answer to the question, "Will Manuel volunteer for the talent show again next year?"
- Ali: Yes.

He would often bid for a chance to talk, but then be lost when he won the floor, as in this example (Doctor, Day 5):

- T: D-, do any of these go there? (referencing the categories discussed) Is she judging without knowing very much, is she not asking questions, is she using only her life experience?... What do you guys think?
- Ali: She's, wait, wait, wait, what?

Additionally, sometimes Ali would be eager to answer, but be incorrect (McBroom, Day 5):

T: I also wanna talk about this word cuz it's a good vocabulary word. "Rambunctious." Who kno-, who's heard that word? Ali, what does it mean?

Ali: Uh, rambunctious, like, like, trying to open something.

The previous examples were somewhat minor, but Ali also often bid for the chance to speak and had substantial conceptual misunderstandings in what he wanted to say (Doctor, Day 5):

T: What are you thinking, Ali?

Ali: I'm thinking that she's waiting to judge her. Cuz now she didn't even judge her yet...

T: You don't think Dr. Johnson is judging this? (Ali shakes head) How bout when she says... "These companies know how to make medicine far better than I ever could."... That sounds like a judgment to me. That sounds like she's saying using the companies is better, than making it herself. What do you think?... ... When she says, "These companies could make it way better than I ever could," that's an opinion, like she's stating her judgment of it, isn't she? (Ali nods, awkwardly)... Is she saying, like, d-, do you know what I'm saying? Like is she saying, "Oh, maybe I should try it."... Is she saying stuff like that?

Ali: No.

T: No, she's saying, like, "No, th-, this is the better way," sort of like what Farrah was saying, "cuz this is the way I've always done it," and, and, she doesn't know very much about how to make her own medicine. So she's judging it without knowing very much.

His misunderstanding of Dr. Johnson's closed-minded comment was troublesome both because it was on the heels of Farrah building a case for her words showing closed-mindedness, which he seemed to dismiss, and because it was the cornerstone of our meta-analysis of the pair/threesome work. Not understanding this signified that he was struggling to make sense of the text and our discussion. Even when Ali seemed to be following the train of thought, he often broke down somewhere, and it wasn't clear if he was answering too quickly or had some drastically different understanding of the text from the rest of us (Marven, Day 4):

T: So, when he first comes to camp we said he feels good. He's like, "These lumberjacks are crazy weird. I like looking at them. I got my own room." Then he has to wake up the jacks. Look at this, guys. Is that a good experience or bad?

Group: [scattered "bad"]

Ali: [That's a] really bad one.

T: If they asked him right after this, "Do you wanna go home, Marven?" do you think he'd say yes?

Group: [scattered "yes" and "yeah"]

Ali: [No.]

Even though Ali added to the idea of Marven's bad experience in the above excerpt, calling it "a really bad one," he then concluded that Marven would not want to go home. This was not an unusual example, and it was very confusing how Ali was coming up with these responses. There are indications that it was simply because he answered too quickly, as in this example (Marven, Day 4):

T: Marven feels relieved to have a solution to his problem. Is relief a good feeling or a bad feeling?

Ali: Bad.

Alyssa: Good.

T: Relief is a bad [feeling?]

Ali: [Oh.]

There is evidence he wasn't paying attention, but simply talking about anything that came to mind (Marven, Day 4):

T: Where is he?...

Ali: Jack's!

Ahlam: I-, in the woods.

T: In the woods. Jack's is not a place, Ali. He is in the woods.

Even when Ali was animated about his answer to a question, he often couldn't support it with any sort of evidence (Doctor, Day 5):

T: Is she really gonna, wanna... you know, think about, "Oh, maybe I should ask Manuelita a way to solve this person's earache instead of just giving them medicine." Is she really gonna change that much, do you think?

(Ali was saying "yeah" repeatedly through the last turn)

T: Ali says yeah. Why?

Ali: I don't know, I just say yes, cuz...

Ali's teacher confirmed that this behavior is typical:

When speaking with Ali, he likes to respond as quickly as possible without thinking through his answer. Many times I feel as though he doesn't fully understand because he is already thinking of a quick response before he hears the entire question. When we are having class discussions about a specific content area, I hear responses that haven't been thought through. When we are having a personal discussion, he tends to listen better and give a more thoughtful response. (Kelson teacher questionnaire)

A second pattern in Ali's participatory behavior was that his constant talking infringed on other people. Sometimes he interrupted people, but more often his ongoing commentary was simply a distraction. It also caused me to miss some of his more helpful contributions because I had to learn to tune Ali out a little. Sometimes I had to explicitly remind him to stop talking over people when someone else had the floor (McBroom, Day 5):

Farrah: Or when, like, when they're doing something and then they say, "You're a fool."

T: Yeah, why would they say, "You're a fool"?

Ali: Cuz you're just like [*inaudible*.]

T: [Let her talk.]

There are dozens of similar examples in the transcripts of Ali talking whenever he wants, whether or not he has the floor and whether or not anyone else is speaking.

The third pattern in Ali's participation was that he often repeated the responses of others as his own. Sometimes he would claim that he was going to say something someone just said. He was especially prone to doing this when an answer received praise, as when Riad figured out a tricky piece of text analysis (Marven, Day 4):

T: Well, that tells us that he's learned his job really well. So you're right, if he's learned it really well and he finished early, maybe it's not that exciting to him, it's not, it's not, um, challenging. But there's something, there's a little word in here that turns it up, that helps us know... You know that this is pretty, you know, getting pretty boring for him. Alyssa?... ..

Alyssa: Something like he does the same thing over and over.

T: Yeah, how do we know he does the same thing over and over?

Alyssa: Um

T: What is the, what is the t-, what, which part of the text there tells you that?... ..

Alyssa: Um... .. I don't know.

T: Not sure? Ahlam?

Ahlam: Um... .. I'm not sure what it says, "And Marven... .. And Marven played... something."

T: And Marven kept to his office? This part?

Ahlam: No. The one after that "but."

T: "But today he wanted"

Ahlam: "But today he wanted"...

T: "He wanted to explore." That gets to the feeling that he's excited that he finally gets to go skiing. But it doesn't tell us about his job. Riad?

Riad: Um... "Every day the routine was simply meals and work," so he could do that. (Teacher high fives him.)

Ali: That's what I was [gonna say.]

Other times, rather than claiming he "was going to" say something, he just repeated the answer as if that had been his intention all along (Marven, Day 4):

T: (reading text segment) **Marven came upon a frozen lake covered with snow, which lay... in the circle of tall trees like a bowl of...** Do you remember?

Ali: Uh, ice cream.

T: Nope, what does he say it looks like, it's [sparkly.]

Ali: [Oatmeal.]...

T: White and sparkly like a bowl of sugar.

Ali: Sugar.<sup>66</sup>

Ali's tendency to go along with whatever was recently said caused him to completely change his position in a short segment, when asked whether Marven could be happy in the great north woods or not. I misunderstood his position as people were calling out, and he simply switched to my assumption. This showed that his position was based more on responses to the group and bids to speak than on evidence (Marven, Day 4):

T: = Now, what do you think? Will Marven be happy in the great north woods or will Marven want to return home? He might not be able to return home. We want to know what he feels. Will he want to return home =

Ali: Yes.

T: he gonna be happy here? = or is

Group: scattered "happy" and "yes"

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<sup>66</sup> It is hard to tell through reading, but the vocal inflection of his turn of talk sounds like he is trying to volunteer that as his answer, not that he is repeating what I said to internalize it.

T: You all think happy?

Ali: I think sad. [No,] =

Ahlam: [Happy.]

Ali: = No. He's gonna go back home. That's my choice.

Group: scattered "happy"

T: Weird. The other group was very, they were arguing about this a lot. Everybody thinks happy.

Ali: Yeah.

T: Tell me why.

Ali: What about Kamel? If he comes back and goes, like, "Sad," then it will just mess up the record.

T: Ali, why do you think happy?

Ali: Uh, because he's, eh, he's really safe with the jacks... [The jacks] =

T: [He is really s-]

Ali: = are comforting him.

T: The jacks are helping him feel better. Okay.

Ali's tendency to speak too quickly, too often, and to claim responses that were not his were challenges in the group discussions, but I do not wish to imply that Ali never made productive contributions to the discussions. Sometimes he made contributions that were accurate and helpful. During a discussion of a pivotal moment in *Marven of the Great North Woods*, Ali added nuance to Marven's feelings (Marven, Day 4):

T: And we also said Marven feels comforted, that he doesn't have to be with anyone else. When you're comforted, do you feel good or bad?

Ali: S-, you feel safe.



T: You feel safe. Is that a good feeling or a bad feeling? [Happy] =  
Ali: [Good.]  
T: = or sad?  
Ali: Good.

During our discussion of *The New Doctor*, Ali came up with an idea we hadn't considered.

Rather than choosing between traditional and modern medicine, Ali proposed, Dr. Johnson could try to combine the best of both practices (Doctor, Day 5):

T: Yeah, Ali.  
Ali: I think she might use both because she's, she's trying to learn both ways to combine them better.  
T: So if she, so Ali has a prediction that after this story she would go on combining them both together. So would that be an example of being open or closed-minded about traditional [medicine?]  
Ali: [Open.]  
T: Open. Why?  
Ali: Cuz she's, like, wanting to learn more and combining her stuff with it.  
T: Cuz she's wanting to learn more and she's willing to try something new. Right?.

Ali also remembered important themes, such as Manuel's motivation for performing in *La*

*Bamba*, (La Bamba, Day 4):

T: No, so he thinks he's good at this. He thinks he's good at this and will impress people, but that's not something you can do all the time. You need something like a talent show to help you do it. But what's really important here is he's not doing cuz he loves, to sing La Bamba.  
Riad: He's doing it  
Farrah: [For the limelight.]  
Ali: [He's doing it to impress everyone.]

T: To impress everyone. The limelight. Attention. [Right?]

During our *Toto* discussion, he also kept the bravery theme in mind. His buddy even complimented his contribution (Toto, Day 4):

T: If he's a little bit scared does that mean he's not brave?

Riad: [No.]

Ahlam: [No.]

Ali: It means he is brave because he's walking towards it. He's going to it.

T: He's going to it, even though

Riad: Good job, man.

Ali: He's scared.

These are heartening examples of his productive engagement with the text, but they are not typical.

Ali's contributions to the TBDs were often unhelpful for our group sense-making because his desire to speak immediately and often appeared to hamper the time he took to think about his contributions. Moreover, particularly because he was a struggling reader and an English language learner, this was very problematic for assessing and supporting him in this instructional context.

### **Asil and Kamel: Two "Quiet" Struggling Readers**

Asil and Kamel were both very quiet and reserved students, but what was interesting when I coded the transcripts was that Asil was consistently quiet, needed direct questioning to participate, and was dismissed conversationally by her peers, whereas Kamel contributed more often in the pair/threesome settings and was able to show accurate and complex thinking about the texts and discussions in this context.

**Asil.** Asil was a “struggling comprehender” in group 1 whose raw score on the GMRT4 was 28 and whose ELPA score was 3. Therefore, she was one standard deviation below the mean on the comprehension assessment, and was an ELL who was midway to proficiency. In my interactions with her, her English was usually indistinguishable from a native speaker her age, but it was hard to assess because she rarely spoke, which I will discuss below. Her parents told me that she speaks English with them, with her siblings, and with her friends. Asil’s teacher told me that her comprehension is adequate if she is reading at her decoding level, which is below grade-level: “If she is reading text at her level, I feel that she has a basic understanding of what she reads. She is reading below grade level.” (Lawson teacher questionnaire). When she read aloud in the context of this study, she was not fluent and struggled to decode grade-level text.

Asil had a notably meek personality. She rarely talked in either the instructional setting or during the casual chats before and after we met. Her teacher had similar experiences with her: “Asil participates infrequently. She is very shy” (Lawson teacher questionnaire). Nevertheless, I pooled the small number of contributions in the transcripts with additional data from the pair/threesome transcripts, and I noted three patterns in Asil’s participation, which I will describe and illustrate below.

First, Asil rarely spoke during the TBDs and her contributions were always in response to my directly calling on her. In fact, it was easy to count Asil’s turns of talk because they were so rare.<sup>67</sup> During the *La Bamba* unit, Asil spoke ten times. They were mostly one-word answers and they all were responses to my directly calling on her. During the *McBroom and the Big Wind* unit, Asil spoke four times, again in response to my direct questioning. Her responses during this unit were slightly longer and conveyed a bit more content. During our discussion of *The New*

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<sup>67</sup> In juxtaposition, Adel and Ali talked over others and made continual side comments, which made it difficult to actually count where one turn ended and another began.

*Doctor*, Asil did not speak at all. During the *Marven of the Great North Woods* unit, Asil spoke once, in response to my direct questioning. During the *Toto* unit, Asil spoke three times about the text,<sup>68</sup> in response to my direct questioning. She was, without question, the quietest member of the group. During pair/threesome work, though she spoke more, we can still see her resistance to speaking. When she did make attempts to speak, they were brief and she handed the floor over without resistance (McBroom, Day 3):

Dimeh: What's McBroom... or the family doing? McBroom is... he's...

Asil: Um, [he's]

Dimeh: [He's]...

Asil: I think he's [*inaudible*]

Dimeh: [He's,] he's pu-, he's, um... push, uh, he's holding the rope and pushing it towards, uh, his house. He's pushing the rope. (Asil begins to write.)

A second pattern in Asil's participation is that direct questions that scaffolded her contributions seemed to help her to participate. She sometimes responded to such questions with multi-word responses (McBroom, Day 5):

T: That happened in storm one. What happened in storm two that was crazy, and stressful... and Mrs. McBroom almost fainted?

Group: [scattered "Oh!"]

Rayanne: [Oh, biscuits!]

T: What happened, Asil?

Asil: Um... it pulled the kids away?

T: It pulled the kids away.

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<sup>68</sup> She also said "Thanks" when I passed out papers, which I am not counting in the three turns of talk.

In fact, her most verbose contributions were in response to me directly calling on her. An excerpt from *Toto* illustrates how she could offer multiple turns of talk in response to my focusing on her and probing her for more (Toto, Day 4):

- T: We have one more. We just did it. (reading text segment) **Suku went on doing women's chores, he avoided the boys.** The author doesn't say, "Suku is timid and afraid." He doesn't tell us, but what is "going on doing women's chores"? Asil, he keeps doing girls' chores. What does that show us about Suku, and what he's thinking and feeling?...
- Asil: He's feeling... ...
- T: Is he a woman?
- Asil: No.
- T: Why is it, why does the author tell us he does women's chores? What does that tell us?
- Asil: Cuz he's scared of doing mans' chores?
- T: Cuz he's scared of doing men's chores, exactly. And he's "avoiding the boys who tease him."

The best examples of my questions facilitating Asil's thinking were during pair/threesome work when I was present to directly question her and there were less students to interrupt that dynamic. For example, even with a vocal student like Antonio present, I was able to hear what she was thinking about Manuel's experience (La Bamba, Day 2):

- T: (reading text segment) **He mouthed the words to La Bamba and swayed from left to right. Why did he raise his hand and volunteer? Why couldn't he have just sat there like the rest of the kids and not said anything?** How's he feeling?
- Asil: [Bad.]
- Antonio: [Bad.]
- T: Why do you guys say that?

Asil: [Because he, he feels nervous.]

Antonio: [Cuz he's feeling nervous.] *inaudible*

T: What's he nervous about? Tell me a little more.

Asil: [About, um, dancing and singing.]

Antonio: [Like, may-, maybe] uh, just singing. What if he says something wrong.

T: Yeah, so he's, he feels nervous that maybe he's gonna mess up. [Right?]

Asil: [Yeah.]

T: Yeah.

Asil: Which did happens.

T: Yeah, yeah, which does happen, but he doesn't even know what's gonna go wrong there, he doesn't think about his record. He just thinks maybe he's gonna do something wrong.

Asil: If my record falled, I'd be, I would go buy a new one.

T: (Laughs.) Just to be sure, right. See you understand how he feels, Asil. You wouldn't want anything to go wrong.

A third pattern in Asil's participation is that in group discussions, people would often talk over Asil. Even if I called on her directly, it was not unusual for other students to answer instead. Sadly, I occasionally let that happen, as we see in this segment from *La Bamba* (Day 4):

T: It was very loud. Yeah. And, Asil, do you remember we talked about, what... what does "roar" kinda make you think about emotionally? What else roars?

Antonio: [Tigers.]

Group: [Animals.]

T: Friendly things? Do friendly things roar?

Similarly, in pairs/threesomes people often dismissed Asil's rare contributions. When she worked with Dimeh, another quiet student she was friendly with, she let Dimeh's idea trump hers without any discussion (Marven, Day 2):

Dimeh: (reading text segment) **After the second bell, Marven heard the jacks heading toward the eating hall. It was nearly time for his first job... .. He ran through the cold morning darkness to the bunkhouse, peeked in, and counted five huge lumps in the shadows. Marven waited just inside the door... He feels... ..**

Asil: Nervous? Feels...

Dimeh: Feels, um (looks at feelings chart) ... .. Feels bored?... ..

Asil: Bored? Okay... ..

Throughout their pair work, Dimeh led the discussion even though Dimeh was not an especially confident or verbose member of our group. The tendency to dismiss Asil was even more evident with bolder students. A segment of Mustafa and Asil working together shows how she was bowled over by his aggressive nature (Toto, Day 2):

Mustafa: Okay, I'll do all of it. *inaudible*. (reading text segment) **Suku watched, okay, I'm gonna read it, I'll tell you where to put it. You get the tape and... Suku watched when the herd boys walked jau-, jauntily out of the village, brandishing their wooden staffs and shouting to their charges. At seven he was old enough to go, but Suku was frightened... Okay. Put timid and afraid. Get tape... .. Suku's fist tightened around the handle of his knife. He wasn't sure at all whether the knife would do him any good, but he was prepared to defend himself. Sounds brave. Put it right here... Brave... .. Okay? *inaudible*. Now Suku would neverfeel shy of the village boys again. He knew.** Okay confident. So he, put another one...

Asil: *inaudible*... again?

Mustafa: Okay. Yeah... .. **And inside the ring of gently rolling purple hills, Toto, the little elephant, roamed with the herd across the grasslands. But whenever he saw the young weaverbirds flying from their... he watched... .. I don't know what that means... .. Toto walked on through the darkness. Sometimes, he would see the moon reflected on**

**the river, and he hurried to catch up with it...** Wanderlust.  
Wanderlust... .. Oh, there's two. **It was good to be back home, Toto thought co-, con-**. Alright. This one here... So here... .. Wait, wait. Take these off...

Asil:        Alright... All of them?...

Mustafa:   No, just this. Just this... We did it wrong... .. No keep this one. This one's right... .. I think this one's right. So this one's supposed to be first. Then you kept that one... Right here? And *inaudible*... .. Put it this... Right here.

Although the dynamic was extreme with these two students with polar opposite participatory patterns, the pair/threesome participation structure was often like this for Asil.

Asil's contributions to the text-based discussion were so rare that it is difficult to say what she was learning. Gaining insight into her thinking required that I directly question her, and that I make sure others gave her space to speak. The pair/threesome element of this study's approach provided me additional opportunities to do this, but was also a context in which she rarely spoke voluntarily and where the other students talked over her or dismissed her contributions.

**Kamel.** Kamel was a “struggling comprehender” in group 2 whose raw score on the GMRT4 was 28 and whose ELPA score was 3. Therefore, he was one standard deviation below the mean on the comprehension assessment, and was an ELL who was midway to proficiency. In my interactions with him, his English was understandable, but often had grammatical errors with respect to noun-verb agreement and pronouns use. Like Asil, however, his language was difficult to assess because he rarely spoke, which I will discuss below. His parents told me that he speaks Arabic with them, and English with siblings and friends. Kamel's teacher told me that his comprehension is impaired due to his difficulty decoding grade-level texts: “I feel he understands what he reads as long as it is a good-fit for him. He is reading very much below grade level. Needless to say, grade-level texts are challenging and comprehension is



compromised” (Mason teacher questionnaire). When he read aloud in the context of this study, he was not fluent and struggled to decode grade-level text.

Kamel had very a reserved personality, but would speak readily when addressed and occasionally clowned around quietly with peers during downtime. He rarely volunteered to talk in the instructional setting, but would usually offer insightful answers when I called on him or when I was present in the pair/threesome participation structure. His teacher had similar experiences with him:

Kamel rarely participates in whole-class discussions. He also does not participate when students are asked to work in small groups. He is content to let the other students do all of the work. He will, however, participate during reading group. This is a small group setting and he participates when I am the facilitator. (Mason teacher questionnaire)

In spite of the small number of contributions in the transcripts, with additional data from the pair/threesome transcripts, I noted two patterns in Kamel’s participation, which I will describe and illustrate below.

First, Kamel rarely spoke during the TBDs and his contributions were usually in response to my directly calling on him, but he spoke more readily in the pair/threesome setting. Like Asil, it was easy to count Kamel’s turns of talk during TBDs because they were so rare. During the *La Bamba* unit, he had to leave early and did not speak before leaving. During the *McBroom and the Big Wind* unit, he shook his head once in response to my direct question, and spoke five times in succession during a brief exchange with me in response to my direct questioning. During the discussion of *The New Doctor*, he shook his head once in response to my direct question, spoke voluntarily once with a one-word answer, and spoke five times with two- to four-word answers in response to my direct questioning. Kamel was absent for our discussion of *Marven of the Great North Woods*. After all of that quietness, however, during the *Toto* unit, Kamel spoke eight times, with several of his contributions being both voluntary and more extended turns of talk.

Even though this last unit was quite a change for him, he was still the quietest member of the group. During pair/threesome work, however, Kamel spoke more often. In this pair work for *La Bamba*, Kamel readily offers me an answer in response to the simple question “What do you guys think?” (La Bamba, Day 2):

Zeina: (reading text segment) **What am I doing here? thought Manuel. This is no fun at all. Everyone was just sitting there.**

T: What do you guys think?

Zeina: Um

Kamel: I kind of think that he thinks that, eh what he's, his talent is, like, not really good.

More interesting, however, is the fact that later in this pair work, when Zeina paraphrases his contribution slightly incorrectly, he restates his thinking to clarify (La Bamba, Day 2):

Zeina: Yeah, so we have to write that. So like, now then we have to start it because, because everyone... Everyone was bored... bored... and, bored and, um, like, they think, [they think that his talent, talent is kinda like boring or something?]

Kamel: [No, he thinks it.]

This shows that he is attending to his own understanding and to the task at hand, and his ability to defend his contribution when his peer is misrepresenting it. We see it again during the his pair work on *The New Doctor* with Riad, who is a bright and verbal member of the group, but doesn't appear to intimidate Kamel (Doctor, Day 3):

Riad: (reading text segment) **Josefa was crying softly. Lupe is a little curandera, she said in English. She knows the good way. You, a curenda, curandera? Dr. Johnson asked. What does she mean? Manuelita has taught me many things, Lupe said. Well, I guess that explains your interest in medicine. Lupe, I welcome you to come talk to me as often as we can find the time. Maybe I can undo some of the wrong ideas you may have...** What does Dr. J.'s words tell us about what she is thinking? Ummm...

Kamel: Well...

Riad: She's thinking

Kamel: She's thinking that

Riad: Lupe could help her learn the way the medicine?

Kamel: No, she's thinking that Lupe does her medicine wrong. She still does not know how to do the medicine, eh, [right and she wants] =

Riad: [So, *inaudible*]

Kamel: = to help her.

Riad: She's thinking Lupe can teach her the wrong way.

Kamel: The right way to make medicine because she, eh, eh

Riad: She doesn't know how?

Kamel: Yeah.

I used a productive pair/threesome moment like this to directly address Kamel in the TBD, when I recalled him talking about a particular segment in the pair/threesome setting. Note, however, that I had to create space for him among the more eager-to-talk students (McBroom, Day 5):

T: Now, Kamel, I remember you picked out the gopher hole sentence, so tell us, read us the sentence... "We found out [later"]

Kamel: (reading text segment) **[Found] out later the wind had shingled every gopher hole in the next county.**

T: Why did you say that's personifying?

Kamel: Uh, because it =

T: Boys.

Kamel: = the wind, uh, it took out, the nails out of the roof, eh, so the roof, *inaudible*, on the gopher holes.

T: Yeah. Okay, tell them. So, t-, we had a talk about it, right?... Gophers are animals that live in the ground. And to come up out of the ground they have holes. So what did the wind do to those holes, Kamel?

Kamel: Uh, they dropped the roof on the hole.

T: Exactly, so, remember, what are shingles?

Farrah: They're, um... the

Ahlam: Tiles.

T: Tiles, where are those, where are they?

Ahlam: On the roof.

T: On the roof. So, these tiles, these squares are blowing all around. Here's a gopher hole, Kamel. Pretend this is the ground. What did it, what did it do with the shingles, Kamel?

Ahlam: It made the shingles go on the top of the hole.

T: Thank you, Ahlam. But your name is Ahlam and not Kamel. But that's okay. But, yeah, show me, Kamel. What did it do with the shingles if this is the hole?

Kamel: I-, it put the roof.

T: Yes. It dropped the shingles on top of the gopher hole, so it's like it gave it a roof.

A second pattern in Kamel's participation is that when he did speak, we saw glimpses of his careful attention to the ideas being discussed. Some of this is seen in the above segments. Additionally, during the discussion of *Toto* I circled back to an interjection from Kamel, who then offered a new idea (*Toto*, Day 5):

T: Look how Suku's changes kind of bounce back and forth a little, all the way to the end. Suku's kind of, he's timid still, but he's getting braver. But *Toto*, as soon as he gets stuck in that trap, we never hear of his wanderlust again. "In fear and pain he trumpeted loudly." What was he trumpeting for?

Ali: He was, [with his] =

Ahlam: [Help.]

Ali: = mom and help.

T: Help. All he wants here is to be where?

Group: [Home.

T: Home.]

Kamel: [That might be,] like, dangerous.

T: "For the first time in his life, Toto was alone."

Ali: Because he

T: Does that sentence make you feel happy or sad for him?

Ali: Sad.

Ahlam: Sad.

T: He doesn't wanna be alone. He wants to be with his family. Kamel?

Kamel: Uh, when he trumpeted, could have been dangerous. The people that sh-, made the trap could have heard him, and they knew he'd been caught, [and came right away.

T: Kamel's right] =

Ali: [*inaudible* Suku *inaudible*]

T: = That could have been dangerous.

This was a very rare voluntary contribution from Kamel, during our last unit. Although it may have been coincidence, another example comes from the same unit's TBD. For the first time he volunteered a position on the prompt and defended it (Toto, Day 5):

Kamel: I think that Suku changed, uh, because at first he was scared to go to the valley... But then he did go to the valley.

T: Okay. And you, why do you think that was a bigger deal change than Toto losing his wanderlust...

Kamel: Uh, because at first he was afraid to go there. All the kids made fun of him because he was afraid =

T: Mm-hmm.

Kamel: =but then he went there.

T: Okay, so, Kamel's focusing on this idea of fear. So that's something interesting too, that's different between the two of them. Suku, overcame fear, and Toto overcame want, or desire. So I wonder which one is a bigger deal to overcome. You're afraid of something and you get over it, or you really want something and you get over it. I'm just wondering what that makes you think.

Kamel's contributions to the TBDs were rare, but he participated more in the pairs/threesome setting. His contributions showed evidence that he understood the text and could articulate and clarify his ideas with his peers.

### **Summary and Discussion of Results**

The research questions ask, “How can Functional Grammar Analysis (FGA) be used to support text-based discussions?” and “What affordances and challenges do the pedagogical features of FGA—the routines, participation structures, and metalanguage—present for the design and enactment of text-based discussion units?” The results in this chapter show two-staged TBDs that I deem successful because students co-constructed effective arguments when they took positions on the persuasive prompts and supported their positions with reasonable evidence. The results also show the different participation profiles of four struggling readers in this instructional context. Here I summarize these results and discuss what they mean for the research questions.

#### **A two-staged TBD**

The five different enactments of FGA-supported TBDs in this study show two distinct stages. The initial review served to gather and organize the evidence. The work done during the two previous days, which involved repeated exposure to specific text segments and analysis of the language of those segments (both hallmarks of the FGA pedagogy) fueled this stage. It was not a review filled with low-level recall questions, but rather a review focused on the text's "big idea" and an effort to synthesize the analyses of all the different pairs/threesomes in terms of that focus. The subsequent prompt-focused stage challenged students to take positions on the prompt and support them. Students co-constructed arguments during this stage, with varying degrees of clarity, accuracy, and effectiveness. Both agreement and disagreement among students as they built arguments resulted in the incorporation of many pieces of textual evidence, and students used inferences and text connections in reasonable ways as well. Students were working hard to engage in this complex work.

The two-staged structure was a unique way to prepare students to co-construct arguments and engage in other rich talk about the text. Two other TBD approaches informed the design of this study's FGA-supported TBD units. After looking at the findings in this study it is helpful to consider how this design differs from its inspirations.

The research on Collaborative Reasoning (CR) is rooted in making the most of the nearly ubiquitous classroom practice of discussing stories by challenging the recitation approach common in these discussions, in which teacher questions intended to assess students dominate. CR is intended to give students "greater expressive latitude" (Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998, p. 172) as they discuss text. The approach's design has students read a narrative text silently at their seats, then gather together to wrestle with the "central question" that drives the TBD. Students are asked to take positions on the question and support them using "the

multiple resources of the story and their own prior knowledge” (Waggoner, Chinn, Yi, & Anderson, 1995, p. 581). The debate of a central question in a CR approach inspired the persuasive prompt component (and associated second stage of the TBD) in this study’s approach. The teacher’s role during a CR discussion is that of facilitator, and includes behaviors that I described for myself in the second stage of the TBD, such as prompting students to take positions, demonstrating how to support positions, clarifying information, and acknowledging and summarizing student contributions (Anderson, et al., 1998). Essentially, the second stage of the FGA-supported TBD resembled a CR discussion.

There are two principal differences between CR discussions and FGA-supported TBDs. The first lies in their foregrounded intents. CR researchers describe the “ultimate goal” of the work as helping students to become people who can take positions based on careful thought and reasoned discourse, which they underscore as an imperative academic skill (Anderson, et al., 1998). Although they say that the approach is intended “to stimulate critical reading and critical thinking skills” (Anderson, et al., 1998, p. 172) supporting students’ comprehension of the details and nuances of the text is an ancillary focus in their work. The researchers state that “mastery of the events stated in the story is not the main objective” (Waggoner, et al., 1995) but still assert that the approach can prompt students to read the text more carefully and deeply in order to support their arguments. The FGA-supported TBD, however, foregrounds the intent to capitalize on that ancillary benefit. It uses the discourse valued by CRs to enhance students’ text comprehension. My intent in the design of this approach was always rooted in the idea that such discussions could theoretically support students in the meaning-making process. Thus, however cumbersome the talk during the second stage might be, the process of constructing arguments with the help of peers and the teacher would facilitate students’ co-construction of meaning from



the text. The driving question (and sub-questions) are part of what shape students' engagement with a text (Duke & Pearson, 2002) and the persuasive prompts that root this study's discussions demand complex and holistic thought about the texts, in order to construct a meaningful gestalt after two days analyzing smaller segments. It is not that this is in conflict with a CR perspective; it is simply that the focus of this study's approach is less focused on students learning to engage in this discourse independently, and more focused on how the discourse supports their meaning-making with the text. The design was intended to better support reading comprehension for a group of readers who traditionally lag behind in a myriad of reading achievement measures. Thus, the discussion was the means, more than the end because, as Reninger (2007) explains in her dissertation study:

Discussions are contexts where lower-achieving readers may acquire a more complete understanding of the text, practice comprehension strategies in organic ways, engage in high-level thinking about text, and use the discourse from discussions as a tool for subsequent classroom writing tasks. (p.284)

The aim of this teaching experiment was to develop an instructional design and test it for enough merit to warrant further study, not to prove that students' comprehension of the texts was improved. Nonetheless, the results that show ELLs from a low SES demographic constructing rich and dynamic arguments supported by textual evidence are heartening. They imply that students who are often expected to struggle with reading are able to articulate nuanced and deep meanings from the text in efforts to support their positions.

The second principal difference between CR discussions and FGA-supported TBDs is the way students are prepared for participation in the discussion. In the CR approach, students read the text and then move right to the discussion. In this study's approach, students spent two days engaged in the analysis of language with discussion-relevant segments of the text, then used that work to prepare for the debate of the prompt. Before the CR-similar discussion began, students

reviewed key parts the text with the “big idea” in mind, constantly assessing the co-constructed meanings for the roles they each could play as evidence in the subsequent stage of the discussion. Adding this “stage” before the TBD was intended to help all students find entrée into the discussion, and to focus the students’ talk (without much teacher intervention) on the most helpful evidence. This, I assert, helped the readers to participate more willingly, reasonably, and thoughtfully in the discussion, which benefited the text comprehension of the group as a whole.

The idea that certain students, particularly ELLs, need some preparation for TBDs brings me to the other TBD approach that influenced this design. The research on Instructional Conversations (ICs) similarly emphasizes an important preparatory stage for helping students better grapple with the ideas in the text. This approach grew out of efforts to extend the successful work of the KEEP project and its “experience-text-relationship” (ETR) method of discussions used to promote reading comprehension with native Hawaiian children (Au, 1979). The ETR method emphasizes to students that drawing on previous knowledge and experience can help them make sense of text. The IC research emphasizes this idea within the ten components of successful ICs (Goldenberg & Patthey-Chavez, 1995). Two of the components<sup>69</sup> are a “thematic focus” and “activation and use of background knowledge and relevant schemata” (Echevarria, 1995, p. 538). First the teacher chooses a “theme or idea to serve as a starting point to focus the discussion and has a general plan for how the theme will unfold” (Echevarria, 1995, p. 538), which is similar to this study’s determination of the text’s “big idea.” With this theme or idea in mind, the teacher then plans for the pre-reading stage articulated by the second component. The way teachers plan for this component is by “hooking into” (Echevarria, 1995, p. 538) or providing the background students need about the textual topic, in order to then weave

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<sup>69</sup> The other components describe the desirable atmosphere, types of talk and questions, and participatory behaviors of the teacher and students. These two are the ones descriptive of what could be considered a pre-TBD “stage” in the approach.

that experience into the discussion of the text. Sometimes this involves an extended conversation about a topic before reading, to prime students' schemata, and sometimes it involves a shared experience around a topic students might have little experience with, such as watching a soccer game if the text is focused on soccer. This is intended to support text comprehension by activating information the students know, so that they can draw on that when reading and discussing the text; like the FGA-supported TBD, the IC approach recognizes that some students could benefit from support for reading and discussing the text.

The focus of that support is where ICs and FGA-supported TBDs differ. Whereas ICs provide much of that support through activating or building up background knowledge that is important for the theme, the FGA-supported TBD provides much of that support through careful re-reading and meaningful analysis of the language of text segments that are important to the theme. The "review" stage of the TBD is somewhat analogous to the IC schemata activation in that it is intended to prime students' thinking about the text, but instead of priming background knowledge, the review primes students' knowledge about the text's language and co-constructed understandings of the most important text segments that developed during the previous days' work.

Two aspects of the results, combined with what we know about these two other established empirically-supported approaches to TBDs, support the idea that the FGA-supported TBD in this study can be considered effective for supporting meaning-making from text. First, the students in this study co-constructed compelling, text-supported arguments. Not every attempt was fully successful, but they worked toward that goal with each other and with me, and were often able to take a position, support it with evidence from the text or their background knowledge, and elaborate on their explanation of that connection, as shown in the excerpts above. They

successfully used textual evidence to support their positions, used their agreement with each other to pool evidence from multiple parts of the text, and used their disagreements with each other to evaluate the weight of different evidence. This is complex thinking about text that does not occur during recitation-style classroom talk about text, and this sort of thinking extends and deepens students' meaning-making processes. Second, these students used the text as their primary source of evidence for arguments. Students drew from the text more than from text-to-self connections to support their positions. Students also gestured to and used short-hand ways of referencing the graphic display of text segments we had worked with. It is likely that this inclination to reference the text and to refer to the composite of our work was supported in part by the first stage of the TBD that rooted the discussion in a thematic idea and provided time for them to focus on and synthesize the key segments of the text, after having worked to co-construct deep meaning from their assigned segments during the days before. This was priming students for successful comprehension of text, as the IC approach does, but with more instructional weight given to academically-valued sources of evidence.

The transcripts show what experts in comprehension instruction are calling for with respect to talk about text:

This should involve both teacher-to-student and student-to-student talk. It should include discussions of text processing at a number of levels, from clarifying basic material stated in the text to drawing interpretations of text material to relating the text to other texts, experiences, and reading goals. (Duke & Pearson, 2002, p. 208)

These elements were present, even in these initial attempts at this approach. The incorporation of FGA into TBD units described in this study could serve as a potential resource for researchers or teachers using any TBD approach that could benefit from more support for specific students (such as ELLs) or for specific purposes (such as reading to build persuasive arguments).

In summary, two successful TBD approaches strongly influenced the design of the FGA-supported TBD, and I believe that the two-staged TBD that resulted from the design capitalize on the best features of both approaches. The transcripts show academic thought and talk about text occurring with a group of fourth grade ELLs, which is promising for this instructional approach. There is enough evidence of its success with a characteristically struggling group of readers to explore the approach further and to argue that the meaningful analysis of language in important segments of the text is something that could potentially be offered as additional support to the students who need it.

### **Considering our struggling readers**

I looked closely at two pairs of struggling readers: two who spoke often and two who spoke rarely. Each pair showed evidence that the amount of verbal participation did not necessarily correlate with their levels of comprehension of the text. One in each pair showed evidence of accurate and rich understanding, and one in each pair showed evidence that they might be struggling to construct meaning. These results serve to complicate our study of TBDs and their support of struggling readers.

It was my intent that this pedagogical design would better prepare struggling readers for a text-based discussion. My hope was that we would see them not only participate, but make contributions that were accurate and thoughtful. Participation in such discussions is important for learning because of the role of language in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1965; Vygotsky & Rieber, 1998). Participation is also important for instruction because of its position as a window into student comprehension; Duke and Carlisle (2011) remind us that “we cannot know what meaning a reader constructed from a given passage or set of passages until that reader says or does something... and even then we are only able to make inferences about the meaning the reader constructed” (p. 201).

Because of this theoretical and practical emphasis on discussion, my critique of the extant TBD research was that not enough attention was given to how struggling readers participated in the discussions. I was concerned that students who struggled to comprehend text would be, ironically, the ones who were least able to take part in these discussions, and that theoretically, if they were less productively engaged, they were possibly not gaining the same benefits as other students. For example, if a student is confused about some basic aspects of the text—who a character is, where the story is set, who is speaking, etc.—this could make contributing to the discussion or making sense of the contributions of others difficult. Similarly, if a student understands the basic aspects of the text, but struggles with constructing his own deeper understandings—which ideas are important, how a theme is woven through the text, what the characters’ actions are showing us—this too might hinder his participation in and understanding of the discussion. ELLs and struggling readers are vulnerable to both of these possibilities. As I described in Chapter 6, this is the paradox of this work: discussion fosters understanding, but understanding also fosters discussion. Furthermore, just as research on TBDs needs to look at struggling readers more closely, research on instruction for struggling readers needs to look at TBDs more closely. Thus, this study was an effort to develop new support for readers who struggled or were at risk for reading struggles, and to see what they did with the instructional approach, which, Reninger (2007) confirms, is a weak area in the literature:

[B]ecause the discourse of reading instruction for lower-achieving readers tends to be more skills-oriented, we know few details about what happens when lower-achieving readers are given the chance during instruction (e.g., in discussions) to think in high-level ways and to practice that way of thinking in other literacy events like writing. (p. 6)

I had hoped that the use FGA as a scaffold for ELLs would also serve as a scaffold for struggling comprehenders in the group, preparing them to participate in the TBD. I drew

knowledge and inspiration from the research on TBDs in general, and the smaller body of literature that focuses on subgroups of students in TBDs (Commeyras, Pearson, Ennis, García, & Anderson, 1992; Dugan, 1997; Echevarria, 1995; Echevarria & McDonough, 1995; Goatley, 1996; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Goatley & Raphael, 1992; Hauschildt & McMahon, 1996; McMahon & Goatley, 1995; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999). For instance, Goatley and Raphael (1992) found that students with learning disabilities progressed in a Book Club approach to instruction developed for mainstream students. Similarly, Echevarria and McDonough (1995) found that ICs require adaptations for students with learning disabilities, but that these students could be supported to participate. Important adaptations to the IC approach included choosing themes and questions that were neither too familiar nor too abstract, creating more visual records of the conversations, altering the length of focal text segments, and more prompting and encouragement to overcome a “history of failure” (p. 118). These kinds of findings helped me be mindful about certain aspects of the FGA pedagogical approach (such as the visual record of our work through the timelines and the length of text segments) and gave empirical support to my instinct that this effort to add more support to a TBD would be beneficial for these students.

The previous section of this discussion explains why I am heartened by the overall results, when I consider the group of ELLs as a whole; but I knew I would be remiss if I didn't look more closely at the struggling readers in the study, as they were the students I wondered about as I combed through the literature on TBDs. In my effort to bring this lens to my study, after analyzing the group participation, I then re-examined the data to examine the role struggling readers were playing in this discourse. I wondered if they were making the same successful moves and showing similar evidence of deep engagement with the text. I had gone

into the study with the idea of soliciting more talk, which, according to the Vygotskian and sociocultural theories framing this work, would serve as both a means for students to construct meaning and evidence that they were doing so. I had thought that the students who did not participate in the discussions needed more support to join the discussions, and that the support should take the form of facilitating their meaning-making process with the text before the discussions began.

When I looked closely at the struggling comprehenders, however, I realized that this effort is more complicated than I had thought because I had made two major assumptions about participation and comprehension. First, I assumed that participation and comprehension were always correlated. This was challenged when I saw how well Kamel spoke about the text, though on rare occasions, and by how inaccurately and somewhat randomly Ali talked about the text, though frequently. I do not wish to imply that there is no correlation. As educators, we have both an instinctual sense of when participation is hindered by a struggle to understand (and vice versa) and we have empirical studies to support that instinct. In her opening commentary for a special edition of *The Elementary School Journal* focusing on instruction for ELLs, Palincsar (1996) welcomed the body of work in that edition because of her previous research working with ELLs in a discursive context around science curricula. She recalls the widely different participatory behaviors of Ting and Manuel, who were respectively more and less outwardly engaged in the work:

As one would expect, the differential participation of these two students in the classroom was reflected in their achievement; whereas Ting grew considerably in her understanding of scientific concepts central to instruction, as well as her understanding and interest in



engaging in the activity of science (generating and testing explanations, searching for evidence to support her claims), Manuel's growth was modest. (pp. 221-222)

We do expect students who understand to contribute, and for that contribution to further enhance their understanding. It is a complicated relationship, however, and our methodology has not been able to fully explain it yet. Murphy and colleagues (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009) point out that “the discourse–learning nexus is complex and highly situated, and the mapping between discourse and learning is imperfect” (p. 741). Part of the complexity is rooted in the fact that “students can be experiencing substantial difficulty with reading comprehension for very different reasons” (Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden, 2013, p. 453). Furthermore, the measures used to assess comprehension—such as the GMT4 used in this study—do not offer insight into why a student is struggling to comprehend. Thus, I am not confident that a comparison of Adel and Kamel would be the same as that for Ting and Manuel, despite similarities in their participatory profiles. Another reason this is complicated is addressed in my second assumption.

Second, I assumed that a poor understanding of the text was the only reason students would resist participation in the discussion. I quickly realized that students’ tendency to talk during the TBD was much more correlated with their tendency to talk to me and their peers in the hallway on the way back to class than it was to their demonstrated comprehension. Adel was a talkative person and spoke a lot during the TBDs. Asil was a quiet person and spoke very little in any context. It is difficult to say how much their text comprehension also influenced these outcomes. So though students’ participation is influenced by their understanding of the text, it is also influenced by their personalities, the context, and a myriad of other factors. Goatley, Brock, and Raphael (1995) found similar complexities in their study of diverse learners participating in

Book Clubs: “Student participation patterns showed a complex web of possible influences including race, gender, status, personality, and disposition.” In these studies, it is impossible, as they are designed, to assess which influences are stronger—these various interpersonal and cultural variables or students’ abilities to participate based on their sufficient understanding of the text. Harper and de Jong underscore the how these influences multiply with different identity characteristics; they discuss the how ELLs’ participation is affected by “affective factors (i.e., personality, motivation, attitude); cultural and educational background; L1 literacy level; age; and approaches to learning (p. 159). Therefore, considering the factors influencing the participation of struggling comprehenders who are also ELLs is very complicated.

In spite of my disappointment, these complicated results helped me to articulate two challenges for future research on discursive approaches to comprehension instruction. Duke and Pearson (2002) caution that we need to “question long-held or favorite assumptions about effective reading comprehension instruction” (p. 232) and I root both of these challenges in assumptions made in the TBD research.

First, we need to more robustly justify our desired participation for students. We make assumptions about the relationships between amounts and types of discursive participation and the benefits that students get from TBDs. As researchers and teachers, we often say that we want students to participate voluntarily and often in the discussions, and we want to see certain kinds of participation (i.e., text connections and inferencing). But examinations of TBDs need to find out who is benefitting from these discussions in terms of our desired outcomes, and examine their participation along such dimensions of quantity and quality. If participation in and of itself is the outcome, we need to theoretically and/or empirically frame our desire for certain amounts or types of talk. We need to answer the question: Why is this type of participation important for

student learning?<sup>70</sup> If improved comprehension is our desired outcome, we need to find ways to measure when comprehension is and is not improving for students involved in TBDs, and correlate those outcomes with types of participation along the same dimensions. For example, Adel's participation can be highlighted to imply successful text comprehension, but so can Kamel's participation. Since there is more from Adel, did he comprehend more? And since Asil said very little, do we assume she comprehended very little? The myriad of other variables affecting comprehension and participation make these implications tenuous. Moreover, we need to keep in mind that relationships might vary from student to student because "there is not a single path to comprehension development" (Duke & Carlisle, 2011, p. 215). As we explore the relationships between participation and other reading outcomes, perhaps we will be surprised by a lack of relationship where we expected one, or frustrated by relationships that are too complicated to articulate in useful ways. Nevertheless, I propose it is the next frontier in this line of inquiry if we want to begin exploring ways to differentiate comprehension instruction—as Duke and Carlisle (2011) call for—to make sure every student can benefit from TBDs.

Second, we need to broaden our definition of participation, both empirically and instructionally. We cannot pool all silence into the same category. Some silent students are disengaged, but some are attentive listeners and internal processors who construct meaning in a different way (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Moreover, some are compelled socially or culturally to say little (Shultz, 2009). Thus, we need to incorporate methods of participation into our TBD work that will work for students who aren't inclined to verbally participate, both to assess them and to see if such participation garners benefits for them. For example, Goatley (1996) cites the teacher's willingness to let her exceptional student Stark participate in unconventional ways as

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<sup>70</sup> To be clear, this is needed when the talk is the desired outcome in and of itself, not as an indirect measure of something else, such as comprehension.

part of the reason he was successful in a Book Club. Dugan (1997) suggests that asking students to put their “wonderings on paper” (p. 90) after reading can give quieter students access to the discussion in a way that keeps them comfortable. Beyond the consideration of the individual, however, we need to consider the network of participatory behaviors occurring in a discussion. Shultz (2009) examines the role of silence in classrooms in her book *Rethinking Classroom Participation: Listening to Silent Voices* and asserts that students are silent not only for idiosyncratic reasons, but for the functions of the group. She asserts that silence needs to be viewed in terms of the participation framework of the group because just as ideas are co-constructed through the utterances of some students, they are co-constructed (and others are not) through the silence of some students. I agree that is important to pursue this aspect of TBDs because “classroom silence raises questions about participation, expectations, and pedagogical practice” (Schultz, 2009, p. 7) and pursuing these questions will enrich the future of TBDs. It will help us think about the student benefits from TBDs in terms of two types of access: students’ access to participating and teacher/research access to students’ thoughts.

Murphy and colleagues (Murphy, et al., 2009) summarized their meta-analysis of many quantitative TBD studies and came to similarly complex conclusions about student participation:

In effect, what this extensive analysis reminded us was that talk is a *means* and not an *end*. It is one thing to get students to talk to each other during literacy instruction but quite another to ensure that such engagement translates into significant learning. Simply putting students into groups and encouraging them to talk is not enough to enhance comprehension and learning; it is but a step in the process” (p. 761).

Therefore, when I look at the participation of students in this study, I am looking at participation as a window into their thinking, which may be heartening, or may be concerning; moreover, I am concerned about the students for whom I did not have that window. As teachers and researchers,

we need to continue to encourage talk, but not be satisfied with talk alone. Conversely, we need to continue to encourage talk, but also look for other windows into student thinking.

In summary, the results of the FGA-supported TBDs were encouraging because I found wonderful examples of students co-constructing arguments, but another set of findings—the widely differing participatory behaviors of “struggling comprehenders”—merits consideration. Although the transcripts offer evidence of rich student participation, close examination of the case studies shows varying participation and levels of textual understanding across the four students. Because participation is a complicated construct, TBDs are a complicated instructional approach. Teachers face a challenging task when asked to support struggling readers’ participation. For example, should students like Asil be compelled to speak more? Should students like Ali be somewhat silenced? Researchers face a complicated task when they study instruction intended to support these students discursively. How do we know if Adel benefitted from his zealous participation? How do we know if Kamel benefitted less? The next step in the work is to develop robust theories about desirable participation and to empirically test them. Within that development, we have to consider the role silence plays in the individual student and the group. With so many TBD approaches already developed, wrestling with the construct of “beneficial participation” would enrich our work empirically and ecologically.

## **CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Programs and approaches designed to foster literacy learning must take into account the needs of diverse learners. Educators must examine such needs and shape current literacy programs and practices to provide literacy access to students of all abilities and needs. (Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995, p. 352)

### **Summary of Conclusions and Discussion**

Incorporating FGA into TBD units was a complex endeavor. The results of this study are encouraging because they show animated discussions of texts' language and meanings in a discursive context with ELLs, students who are often at-risk for comprehension struggles (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010b ; Duke, Cartwright, & Hilden, 2013). The results, however, also bring to light some challenges involved in doing this work. What I wish to underscore in this concluding section is that the challenges of incorporating FGA into this instructional practice are not so uniquely problematic for FGA itself; they are challenges faced by many efforts to enrich classroom instruction by engaging students in work that is novel, complex in content, and atypical in format (see Achugar, Schleppegrell, & Oteiza, 2007; Chien, 2013; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Kucan, et al. 2011; Matsumura, Garnier, & Spybrook, 2012; and Shulman, 1986 for examples and discussions of ways to support complex instruction). Moreover, I argue that the benefits of this approach make it worth addressing such challenges, and that it is even in addressing some of these challenges that practice improves. It is with these points in mind that I summarize and discuss the overall results and articulate some the implications they suggest for research and practice.

We begin instruction with planning, and the planning involved in this instructional design was highly iterative. I created many drafts in my efforts to find a good fit among the text, the focal language features, and the “big idea,” with consideration of the prevalence, salience, and accessibility of language in the text, that can be discussed using FGA constructs and terminology. In spite of multiple drafts, there were adjustments I made during enactments and further changes I proposed post-enactment.

As I discussed, this kind of extensive, non-linear planning is not always the norm in education, neither in practice nor in teacher education settings. Rather, some people find that lengthy, detailed plans that are edited through multiple drafts are artifacts of teacher education programs, and not realistic for day-to-day teaching (Danyduk, 2012). In Calderon and colleagues’ (Calderon, et al., 2005) vocabulary intervention study, their data point to this challenge as well:

Teachers reported that having the lessons fully developed was critical to the implementation. They mentioned that it would have been an insurmountable task to preselect vocabulary from the different tiers, sort words into the appropriate categories, and create a variety of strategies for teaching each word. Teachers also reported that without lessons, they probably would have selected an inappropriate meaning or would have been unsure of how to state the meaning. (p. 130)

The more involved planning process described in this dissertation study is not an optional aspect of the design, however. It is through this type of planning that I discovered how to appropriately use FGA with each text, and thus deepened my understanding of the text to structure the unit in more instructionally powerful ways. Hence, the planning is integral to the approach, and because of its complexity we need to include planning in the efforts to teach the approach.

Supporting teachers to engage in this kind of planning will require a different kind of professional development, with patient expert support (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991).

Teachers will need to see what kinds of units are possible through *representations* of practice, to

learn what went into creating those units through *decompositions* of practice, and to be supported in their efforts to plan their own units during *approximations* of practice (Grossman, et. al., 2009). This rich support has been provided to practitioners before with respect to the ill-defined domain of a TBD (Kucan, et al., 2011).

Although I asserted that changing ideas about the planning process, teaching practitioners how to plan, and providing ongoing support in the process all require an upheaval of the education culture,<sup>71</sup> I do not view this upheaval as a threat, but rather as an opportunity. It is through engaging in such planning—not constantly and not in every area of instruction, but on selective and regular occasions—that we can reflect on the many nuances of instruction and deepen our understanding of certain content and certain pedagogy. The way I engaged with this planning is something I can apply to other instructional contexts, with confidence that I will reap rewards from the messy and complicated process. For example, I learned about new ways to analyze text that became easier with practice and opened my eyes to aspects I had missed. I also learned that time invested in carefully crafting a prompt saves time spent on coherence problems later. Moreover, the planning process does not have to remain quite as challenging over time. In spite of the consistency of iteration in the process, I did become more efficient and targeted as I approached later texts. Thus, engaging in this highly-iterative planning process enriched my planning skills and repertoire; the instruction benefitted from the challenge.

In spite of this intensive planning, this approach is still vulnerable to typical enactment challenges. For example, in this study, students did not work productively in pairs/threesomes. They were often silent or off-task, and, even when working, they were focused on speed and

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<sup>71</sup> See Matsumura, Garnier, and Spybrook, 2013 for a description of an intervention to enhance literacy coaching and its effects on student learning (and for a comparison of the test scores for these schools and schools with typical literacy coaching practices). Their discussion of the professional development involved and fidelity measure results serve as an example of the challenges of changing school cultures about planning, teaching, and support.



accuracy rather than enriching their understanding through discussion with a peer. Additionally, the writing component of the work created distractions from discussion. There are many possible reasons for students' lack of engagement in any instructional context, but whether the causes in this case were social, normative, or academic, the silence and off-task behavior in this context were problematic and pervasive.

Considerations for how to address this challenge point to the need to support students not only as they grapple with content, but also as they maneuver within the academic interactions required for grappling with the content. I discussed the irony of neglecting to create scaffolding for the participation structure, which was itself intended to scaffold analysis and talk about text. Addressing these challenges requires that we help students see discussion as a resource for understanding, writing as a means for expressing ideas to each other, and thinking as the responsibility of the group. I did some of this through my presence, when my “targeting, orienting, and prompting for evidence” moves guided students through the task while also emphasizing this mindset about the work. I argued that the fact that students did produce quality work with my assistance is evidence that with scaffolding the task was within their reach, and thus ideally-suited to their zones of proximal development (ZPDs; Vygotsky, 1965; Vygotsky & Rieber, 1998).

Because of this placement of the task within students' ZPDs, I assert that addressing these challenges wasn't an instructional problem, but epitomizes the very work of teaching. Scholars who have explored how teachers shape instruction and attitudes about learning through their classroom discourse create the theoretical and practical foundation for this idea (Cazden, 1988; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). It was my role to be a scaffold for both the content and the discourse. Although it was challenging because I could not be with every group at once,

reflecting on the results helped me think of ways I could additionally scaffold the work in a classroom and reminded me that participation structures are not contexts that inherently structure engagement, but rather vehicles for teachers to use in ways as mindfully and strategically as they use the content. Additionally, Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) point out that we scaffold students not simply for the task at hand, but to promote their carrying the skill or knowledge with them into their future work and study. It is my hope that the activities in this teaching experiment could help students read text differently in the future and benefit more from discussions of text, even without the scaffolding activity. Perhaps, just as students might learn one day to independently analyze text in the ways we practiced, they might learn one day to independently engage in discussion with their peers about the content. Both of these possibilities require instruction and opportunities to practice and receive feedback. I had neglected this facet in my design, but consideration of how to address these challenges would improve future design, both of this instructional approach and of other instruction that makes use of atypical participation structures. Thus, making moves to help students overcome their resistance to the work enriched my enactment skills and repertoire; the instruction also benefitted from this challenge.

If the challenges with the participation structures can be considered typical, the challenges with the FGA terminology and metalanguage might be considered atypical. The results of this study showed the metalanguage to be both helpful and challenging during instruction. Examining the language in different text segments helped students engage with the text in unique and powerful ways. I summarized these results by saying that the language features of a text can provide students with an *entrée* into text analysis. This conclusion echoes other work using FGA in a similar curricular realm (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press; Schleppegrell, 2013). As such, FGA offers an additional means for supporting text

comprehension that can be used alone, or in tandem with other approaches that emphasize background knowledge, ongoing self-monitoring, aesthetic responses, or other foci.

In spite of this potential, however, researchers and practitioners are sometimes intimidated by the terminology because it is complex (due to our language's complexity) and because it is specialized (i.e., linguistic). The results of this study, which is the first examination of FGA being used with TBDs, address some of these concerns. Theoretically, I made an argument for FGA's terminology and associated metalanguage being tools that, with the teacher's assisted use, scaffold student problem-solving (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976). The metalanguage, in this sense, is not cumbersome or esoteric, but actually facilitates our work to make the task accessible for learning. It provides us with labels that work together flexibly, allowing us to say exactly what we mean about the language, and to do so in necessarily simpler or more complex ways. We see evidence of this in students successfully co-constructing meaning through use of metalanguage. Again, this characterization of the metalanguage as a scaffold echoes similar work (Moore & Schleppegrell, in press; Schleppegrell, 2013).

I also argued that instructional decisions about the language features fit nicely with the RAND model for reading comprehension (RAND, 2002). We make decisions about instruction in the terminology with consideration of the text, the reader(s), and the activity in constant relationship, and that is evidenced in my description of the design process. That said, I will not deny that learning about the terminology and associated metalanguage is a necessary and challenging step in this work. I explained that, from my perspective as a novice with FGA, two dilemmas existed throughout the work with the terminology: talking about it in accurate ways and connecting it to the instructional goals of the unit. I framed it as a second stream of content

to consider, both with respect to knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK, Shulman, 1986).

Working with the metalanguage in clear and productive ways is not an insurmountable challenge. It requires instructional choices, just as any content would, but because working with FGA in this context is new, those instructional choices are still being explored. Having access to experts is of huge importance in these initial designs; they will help to inform and interpret different instructional choices. Further research and practice could lead to the development of familiar classroom artifacts, such as scope and sequence guidelines and mentor texts, among others. Moore and Schleppegrell (in press), for instance, build a case for linking certain language features with certain tasks, such as character analysis. If we develop such tools for practice and keep in mind that the metalanguage is not something that should be applied haphazardly, but requires considerations about coherence with the parallel content, we can use it to fruitfully enhance instruction in novel ways for ELLs, struggling readers, and others. Moreover, thinking carefully about how to talk about the language features and how they fit with the rest of the unit only ensures more careful and deliberate instruction. Thus, working with this new stream of content enriched my lessons with helpful tools and coherence; the instruction benefitted from the challenge.

The planning and pair/threesome work with the metalanguage all were intended to support the end-of-unit TBD. The TBD was where the relationships among the text, its “big idea,” and the language features came together by way of the persuasive prompt. The TBDs that resulted were two-staged, the first being a synthesis of the pair/threesome language analyses and the second being an open discussion of the opposing positions on the persuasive prompt. During both of these stages, students spoke about the text with insight, reasonable connections, and

accuracy. They co-constructed successful arguments that made frequent use of text-based evidence.

I argued that the first stage of the TBD and the preceding work that fueled it served as a unique way to support ELLs for successful participation in TBDs by structuring a focused synthesis of the most important segments of the text with respect to the persuasive prompt. This was an encouraging conclusion, even after acknowledging the challenges and flaws in different aspects of the design. With further refinement informed by this study and others, there appears to be potential for this instructional approach.

The conclusion was complicated, however, when I found the participation of struggling comprehenders to be less clear. In considering how to better assess the benefits that struggling readers get from TBDs, I concluded that research and practice need to give more consideration to ideas of student participation. Although we have theoretical and empirical support for the idea that participation in discussions can foster learning, we need to consider what is happening for students who don't readily participate verbally. We need to consider whether their benefits are moderated by this lack of participation, and what action we should take to ensure they can still reap the rewards of a TBD. Thus, considering the reasons why the struggling readers participated in such different ways fostered a new line of inquiry about the efficacy of TBDs for all students; again, the instruction can benefit from the challenge.

In summary, the results of this study pointed out the affordances and challenges of designing and enacting FGA-supported TBDs. Throughout the planning and enactments, it was not easy work to create cohesion among the text, its "big idea," and the work with different language features; these relationships were both the cornerstone of the design and the root of its ecological complexity. It required iterative planning and continuous monitoring because

changing one of these facets caused changes to how they all fit together and required adjustments across each. Moreover, the enactment was affected by student uptake, teacher content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, and other factors that further complicate the interaction between these aspects of the lessons. Each instance of challenge, however, serves as both a guideline for refinement of the design and an avenue toward more careful, coherent, theoretically driven practice. Thus, I do not see FGA as an overly challenging pedagogical device for supporting ELLs. Rather, I see it as an example of “complex and ill-structured” (Kucan, et al., 2011, p. 2901) instruction that is a means for supporting ELLs’ engagement with interesting texts and nuanced ideas. We must remember that “comprehension is a consuming, continuous, and complex activity” (Duke & Pearson, 2002, p. 206). Many of our students, especially those simultaneously learning language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009, 2010a-c), are struggling with the layered and intricate task of reading comprehension; overcoming these struggles demands equally layered and intricate instruction. With this complexity, however, comes coherence, mindful decision-making, and appropriate scaffolding. With this complexity, I argue, comes improved practice.

### **Limitations**

I explored my research questions through the analysis of my own planning and teaching. Although this offers some insight that would not be available if I had studied another teacher, it also presents the bias of interpreting one’s own work. I made efforts to triangulate my findings with multiple sources of data to combat this bias as much as possible.

The participants in this study were English language learners with varying levels of English competency. The study’s conclusions may or may not be true for work with students

who are not ELLs, or for students who are not Arabic-dominant. Appropriate caution should be used in interpreting the results and evaluating the conclusions.

In the design of this study, there was no consideration of the language use and proficiency of the parents, which greatly affects student language development. Future work might consider more ethnographic approaches to studying how different students take up this approach and a more fine-grained analysis of the role that student language competence plays in uptake of the instruction.

The qualitative nature of such analyses offers descriptions that can inform research discussions, but cannot be used to argue the benefits of FGA supports for TBDs. These results suggest interesting hypotheses about the role of FGA in supporting TBDs and suggest important considerations in the design and conduct of this instruction.

Finally, I am a novice teacher of FGA. There are researchers and educators who are far more familiar with FGA and its pedagogical application. My position as a novice provided an informative lens when I considered how this approach could be introduced in this context in American schools, but it is important to note that some of the challenges I highlighted in this work are likely challenges unique to novices in the realm of FGA.

### **Implications**

This study posits that FGA has the potential to scaffold the participation of ELLs in TBDs. It contributes to the work on ELL literacy instruction, TBDs, and FGA in a unique way. We are still looking for effective comprehension instruction for ELLs that incorporates attention to their oral language and academic language needs; TBDs are a promising avenue for comprehension instruction, but most TBD studies have not looked closely at ELLs or other

subgroups of students; and though FGA has been applied pedagogically before, applications are less prevalent in North America, with elementary children, and with comprehension instruction.

It is my position that research focused on supporting ELLs to take part in TBDs is overdue pedagogical work. This approach to comprehension instruction is a context conducive to addressing the many aspects of literacy that ELL instruction demands. In research on TBDs, however, researchers have not looked at ways to incorporate explicit language instruction, beyond vocabulary. Although this instruction might not be necessary for native English speakers, it may be a beneficial scaffold for ELLs. Palincsar (1998) discusses the theoretical notion of scaffolding and the application of the theory to the reality of teaching and learning settings:

Suggesting that there are multiple routes to understanding and multiple forms of expertise to be valued in a learning community affords the opportunity to find alternative ways in which children who are less successful with the traditional classroom skills (e.g., reading and writing) can successfully contribute to the work of the community. (p. 372)

This study proposes that the use of FGA in TBD units may be a promising new “route to understanding” for our ELL students.

This “new route” is especially helpful in the era of the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), which has prompted a re-examination of classroom practice by practitioners and researchers alike. A look at the anchor standards and the standards specific to fourth grade (the grade level of the students in this study) reveals many ways that the approach described in this dissertation study serves to create instructional space for working on these learning objectives within the domains of reading, language, and speaking and listening (see *Appendix B*<sup>72</sup>). In fact,

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<sup>72</sup> The list of Common Core State Standards that are addressed through this study’s instructional approach is extensive enough for the table to span three pages. Therefore, I chose to make it an appendix.



it could be explored further as an integrative and efficient way to do so because of the combination of reading, close attention to language, and discursive work included in each unit.

Furthermore, the idea that FGA has the potential to be a novel and beneficial scaffold is certainly not isolated to TBDs. Schleppegrell and Achugar (2003) took these ideas outside of the language arts realm, with the work of the California History Project. They stress that content instruction needs a way of dealing with the language used in these content areas. They acknowledge that other approaches traditionally used are still necessary, but dealing with text is very important and often not attended to. Connecting to ideas of scaffolding, they emphasize that approaches that simplify material for ELLs and other students put them at a disadvantage because these students need exposure to grade level content. Language instruction attached to the content, they assert, helps them gain access. Similarly, Fang (2004) analyzes the Functional Grammar features of scientific writing and builds the case that students need to know how to read and write in the genre, not just experience science through inquiry approaches. Schleppegrell (2010) is critical of pedagogical approaches that neglect this realm when she talks about specific support for ELLs, such as “sheltered instruction,” that do not offer specific scaffolds for raising ELLs’ language awareness. Thus, some of the lessons learned from this teaching experiment could guide other efforts in research and practice to use FGA as a support for students as they read text.

Additionally, the theme of my conclusions is that the challenges in this approach point the way to improved instruction, which has implications for teacher education programs. Perhaps incorporating the complex work of FGA into different areas of teacher training and professional development would result in more thoughtful practice. Schleppegrell and Go (2007) stress the success teachers have had using FGA approaches and encourage teacher educators to

consider it as part of teacher preparation. Extending this idea, Hyland (2007) states that the help offered to teachers through this pedagogy also assists teacher educators: “For teacher educators, genre based pedagogies offer principled ways of assisting both pre- and in-service writing teachers to provide their students with targeted, relevant, and supportive instruction” (p. 148). Hyland explains how the pedagogy is explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive, empowering, critical, and consciousness-raising for students and teachers alike.

Finally, the results imply that the work involved in helping FGA-supported TBDs take hold in classrooms is not as unusual as some might think. People may be skeptical of the idea of involving elementary school children in language analysis, and then overwhelmed when they consider doing so with a linguistic system that is nontraditional. However, if we consider the discussions of the results of this teaching experiment, we will see that the issues at play are very familiar: Chapter 4 focused on planning; Chapter 5 made implications for scaffolding the participation structures; Chapter 6 framed the FGA terminology and metalanguage as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) that teachers need to build up; and Chapter 7 spoke to the need to differentiate instruction with ever-more nuance. Planning, scaffolding, building PCK, and differentiating instruction are all important aspects of teacher education. Therefore, applying the rich body of theoretical and pedagogical research we have to improving this instructional approach and supporting teachers to use it is no different than many other instructional and professional development endeavors.

This is not to say the work, though familiar, is not challenging to promote. Murphy and colleagues (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009) point out that there is little evidence that TBDs are easily and effectively replicated by people who were not involved in the design process of the specific approach. Moreover, Duke and Block (2012) found that

despite dissemination of best practices, the complex instruction involved for supporting comprehension is neglected in favor of “easier-to-master skills” (p. 62). Three obstacles they identified—short-term orientation to instruction and instructional reform, a lack of educator expertise, and limited time in school—readily apply to the instruction described in this study. Thus, implementing this instruction in schools faces challenges beyond refinement of the design. That is not reason, however, to limit our efforts to identify, design, and refine the best instructional tools for at-risk students. In fact, if the use of FGA could benefit this work by guiding teacher planning and creating engaging tasks that take students repeatedly back to the text, it could serve as an asset in the effort to foster more classroom uptake of effective comprehension instruction.

In summary, empirical research has shown that students benefit from discussing text with their peers. Students who struggle with comprehension, such as many ELLs, might not benefit as much from these discussions because their participation is hampered by their challenges with oral language and their difficulty understanding the text due to vocabulary and academic language limitations. This study explored the affordances and challenges of using an FGA-supported TBD approach to support ELLs as they read and discussed text and concluded that FGA could serve as an ecologically feasible scaffold for enriching the TBD experiences of such students. Furthermore, the study concluded that teachers’ practices can benefit from learning how to apply FGA to their planning and enactment of TBDs. The findings both reinforce and complicate the idea that TBDs have the potential to promote deep and nuanced understanding of text for an array of readers, and they highlight the ways FGA serves as an instructional tool for TBDs. The findings speak to the challenges ahead for the widespread use of this instructional approach, but also assert that finding ways to overcome those challenges opens a new frontier for

reading comprehension instruction that could benefit a large percentage of our students who struggle to keep up.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This was a small teaching experiment in a specific context intended to design a new instructional approach and explore its affordances and challenges to inform future research and practical applications. Exploring this approach further requires that future research replicate the teaching experiment in similar contexts to compare the results and extend the implications, enact similar teaching experiments in other contexts to see if the results and implications differ as variables change, and experimentally test and compare any encouraging findings that such studies might produce to inform best practices for reading instruction according to contextual variables. There are many contextual variables to consider, such as text types, grade levels, and student language proficiency, to name a few. Additionally, this study was designed to describe this instructional approach in rich and informative ways, but not to be able to compare different students or different instructional approaches in quantitative ways. Therefore, I do not wish to imply that this teaching experiment fully vets the use of FGA as a comprehension support for ELLs; rather, the results were encouraging—with respect to both the ecology of the pedagogy and the groups' discussions—and merit further exploration. We would do well to continue researching a new approach to supporting ELLs to do the rich and complex work involved in a TBD in ecologically feasible and beneficial ways.

I would like to propose four lines of inquiry that are directly prompted by this work. First, additional teaching experiments would help to challenge or reinforce the findings of this study.

Studies that replicated this work would offer comparative data to explore the planning process, students' participatory behavior, teaching moves, application of the metalanguage, and examples of TBD talk. The affordances and challenges would be strengthened and better delineated by a wider body of application. Studies that enacted the approach in different contexts would refine the beginning guidelines described here. For example, for creating coherence among the text, the focal language features, and the "big idea," I proposed that the persuasive prompt is key, but some TBDs do not use such a prompt and would need different guidance. As another example, I proposed that during planning, considering *prevalence*, *saliency*, and *accessibility* are guidelines for choosing the language features to work with, but perhaps with different texts or for different purposes, other guidelines would be more useful.

Second, comparative studies of TBDs—with and without the FGA support—would help us determine in what ways, if any, students appear to benefit from the FGA support. Furthermore, these comparative studies could determine if certain students benefit from this approach more than others. Such research might compel us to add FGA-support to the TBD repertoire, but might also recommend that it be applied selectively with students who most need it.

Third, the FGA literature calls for wider pedagogical application of FGA in general. Research that looks into ways to apply FGA to different types of instruction, different subject areas, and with different participation structures would answer that call. The wider applications could follow the logical trajectories of a growing body of research, perhaps trying a vetted application with different group sizes or for different learning objectives, or perhaps trying a novel pedagogical design with a group shown to benefit from working with FGA.

Fourth, teacher education research that explores how to teach practitioners to work with FGA—informed by this study and the hypothetical studies proposed above—would make two important contributions. It would determine the best ways to enable teachers to do this work by exploring the kinds of support and resources teachers need to build content knowledge about FGA and pedagogical content knowledge about working with it in the classroom. The research could also consider if there are benefits teachers gain from engaging with this instructional approach, such as improved lessons planning habits, more effective text analysis practices, or more mindful teaching moves when working with small groups.

Following this research up along any of these lines of inquiry would benefit the FGA literature, particularly in North America and particularly in elementary school settings. Depending on the line of inquiry, it would also benefit the literature that focuses on that particular learning context of application. Finally, when focused on working with ELLs, such work would benefit our inquiry into how best to instruct this group in text comprehension, while particularly supporting their oral language and academic language needs.

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A: ELPA 2010 Technical Report Excerpts**

Below are excerpts of key passages in the Final ELPA 2010 technical report that speak to the internal and external validity of the measure. The full report can be viewed at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Final\\_Acrobat7\\_317649\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Final_Acrobat7_317649_7.pdf)

#### **Regarding internal validity**

As previously mentioned, the unidimensional Rasch model and the unidimensional PCM were used to fit the data. The fit statistics reported in this technical report (i.e., INFIT and OUTFIT mean-squares) help to determine whether the data fit the model. According to Linacre (2009), high INFIT mean-squares are a bigger threat to validity than high OUTFIT mean-squares, as high INFIT mean-squares indicate that the items are misperforming for the people on whom the items are targeted (p. 439). Based on the results shown in Appendix D, no such validity threat was found with the spring 2010 ELPA data. (Final ELPA 2010 technical report, p. 61)

#### **Regarding external validity**

In order to ascertain the convergent and discriminant validity of the ELPA vis-à-vis an external criterion, grades 3–8 ELLs' performance on the Spring 2010 ELPA were compared to their performance on the Fall 2009 Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)... Table 8.2 indicates that the ELPA total scale score had the strongest linear relationship with the MEAP Reading scale score (i.e.,  $r_s$  ranged from 0.65 to 0.71;  $s$  ranged from 0.73 to 0.84). These correlations were positive and moderately high across all grade levels. Thus, higher scores on the ELPA were associated with higher scores on the MEAP Reading test for each of the six grade levels. The ELPA was also linearly related to the other MEAP subject tests (i.e., Math, Science, and Social Studies), though these correlations were not as strong as those between the ELPA and the MEAP Reading test. Specifically, correlations between the ELPA and the other MEAP subject tests were found to be as follows:  $r_s$  ranged from 0.49 to 0.64;  $s$  ranged from 0.53 to 0.71 (Final ELPA 2010 technical report, pp. 64 – 65).

The positive correlations found between the ELPA and the MEAP Reading as well as between the ELPA and the MME Reading and MME Writing indicate that higher scores on the ELPA were associated with higher scores on the MEAP Reading, the MME Reading, and the MME Writing tests. It is important to note, however, that these Reading

or Writing tests and the ELPA were developed to serve different student populations. In addition, the Listening and Speaking domains were not tested as part of the MEAP Reading, the MME Reading, or the MME Writing tests. Thus, it is not surprising that we see only a moderate to high positive correlations between the ELPA and one of these tests...The analysis of the distribution of student classification across performance levels provides evidence to support the validity of the ELPA cut scores in that about 65% to 97% of grades 3 through 8 students who were classified as Proficient on the ELPA were also classified as Advanced or Proficient on the MEAP Reading test. ... The majority of students in grades 3-8 (from 91% – 99%) who were classified as Advanced Proficient on the ELPA were also classified as Advanced or Proficient on the MEAP Reading Test. (Final ELPA 2010 technical report, pp. 67 – 68)



## Appendix B: Common Core State Standards Addressed Through FGA-Supported TBDs

Key for standards' codes	
CCSS = Common Core State Standards ELA-Literacy = English Language Arts and Literacy CCRA = College & Career Readiness Anchor	R = Reading L = Language SL = Speaking and Listening RL = Reading: Literature

Standard Type	Category	Standard
Anchor Standards for Reading	Key Ideas and Details	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1</u>
Anchor Standards for Reading	Key Ideas and Details	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2</u>
Anchor Standards for Reading	Key Ideas and Details	Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3</u>
Anchor Standards for Reading	Craft and Structure	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4</u>
Anchor Standards for Reading	Craft and Structure	Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5</u>
Anchor Standards for Reading	Craft and Structure	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6</u>
Anchor Standards for Language	Knowledge of Language	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3</u>
Anchor Standards for Language	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4</u>

Anchor Standards for Reading	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5</u>
Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening	Comprehension and Collaboration	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1</u>
Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening	Comprehension and Collaboration	Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2</u>
Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening	Comprehension and Collaboration	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3</u>
Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4</u>
ELA standards; Reading: Literature; Grade 4	Key Ideas and details	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1</u>
ELA standards; Reading: Literature; Grade 4	Key Ideas and details	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions). <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3</u>
ELA standards; Language; Grade 4	Knowledge of Language	Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.3.A</u>
ELA standards; Language; Grade 4	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4.A</u>

ELA standards; Language; Grade 4	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., <i>as pretty as a picture</i> ) in context. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5.A</u>
ELA standards; Language; Grade 4	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., <i>wildlife, conservation, and endangered</i> when discussing animal preservation). <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.6</u>
ELA standards; Speaking and Listening; Grade 4	Comprehension and Collaboration	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 4 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1</u>
ELA standards; Speaking and Listening; Grade 4	Comprehension and Collaboration	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2</u>
ELA standards; Speaking and Listening; Grade 4	Comprehension and Collaboration	Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.3</u>
ELA standards; Speaking and Listening; Grade 4	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4</u>

Standards from: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Washington, DC: Authors. Retrieved March 28, 2014, from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>.

## Appendix C: Unit Plans

### La Bamba unit: FGA-supported text-based discussion

**Big idea:** People can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. Manuel’s mixed feelings about performing in a school talent show will influence his decision about volunteering again the next year.

**Writing prompt:** Do you think that Manuel will volunteer for the talent show again next year? Why or why not?

\*

### DAY 1

Goal	Activity	Important ideas	Big idea
Interactively read the text	Prime background knowledge about the theme and concepts; Introduce and read the text	Mixed feelings; Talent shows	People can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. Manuel’s mixed feelings about performing in a school talent show will influence his decision about volunteering again the next year.

**1. Describe the story and explore the theme:** “In the story *La Bamba*, a boy named Manuel participates in a talent show and has many different feelings about participating, some good and some bad.”

#### ***Mixed feelings:***

- Explain the idea of mixed feelings: “Sometimes something happens and we have mixed feelings about it. ‘Mixed feelings’ means that we have both good and bad feelings during the experience.”
- Provide an example of mixed feelings: “Here’s an example. When I brought my baby son home, my daughter was excited to have a little brother to love and play with, but frustrated when he took a lot of our attention away from her and we couldn’t do everything she wanted because of the baby. She had good feelings – love and excitement – and bad feelings – frustration and jealousy. She had ‘mixed feelings’ about having a new little brother.”
- Ask students if they have ever had mixed feelings about something.
- Connect the idea of mixed feelings to the text/prompt: “We decide if we want to do things again based on our experiences. If it was fun or nice to do, we want to do it again. If it was painful or bad, we don’t want to do it again. When we have mixed feelings about something, it is tricky because we might not be sure if we want to do it again. To

decide, we might ask ourselves if there were more good feelings or more bad feelings, or which of the feelings were stronger. Manuel, the main character in our story, faces a dilemma like that at the end of this story.”

**2. Prime background knowledge:** “Before we read, let’s discuss what talent shows are and imagine participating in a talent show to think about how that would feel. Then we’ll read about Manuel’s experience.”

***What is a talent show? What would it be like to participate in a talent show?:***

- Ask students what they know about talent shows. Provide any additional information and clarify as necessary.
- Ask students to imagine what talent they would perform in a show.
- Guide students through a visualization activity in which they imagine how they would feel after volunteering, during the rehearsal, during the show, and after the show. Ask students about what they feel at different stages of the visualization and list those feelings on chart paper as the activity progresses.

**3. Read the text:** “When we read, I want you to pay attention to how Manuel might be feeling and try to think about whether he is having more good or more bad feelings.”

***Stopping points:***

p. 164 “limelight” – spotlight

p. 164 “applause” – clapping from an audience

p. 164 Explain that “bad” is used as slang for “cool” here.

p. 166 “pantomime” – acting something out without sound

p. 166 “flailing” – waving wildly

p. 166 “debut” – first time

p. 166 “muttered under his breath” – saying words to himself, like thinking aloud

p. 166 Explain what records are and how they work.

p. 167 Explain why scratching a record would be problematic.

p. 167 “sigh” – breath of relief

p. 168 “beamed” – smiled widely

p. 168 “commotion” – noise and chaos/disorganization

p. 171 “maneuvered” – managed to do something mechanically difficult

p. 172 “thumb-wrestling” – a game with the hands; demonstrate

p. 172 The record is stuck. It must have gotten scratched after all.

p. 174 “curtain call” – when performers come out on stage after the show to bow and hear applause

p. 174 “cooled it” – calmed down  
 p. 174 “clustered” – gathered all around

**4. Reveal writing prompt:** Do you think that Manuel will volunteer for the talent show again next year? Why or why not?

**DAY 2**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Reread the text and gather important information	Subgroups reread segments of the text to identify how Manuel is feeling	Mixed feelings	People can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. Manuel’s mixed feelings about performing in a school talent show will influence his decision about volunteering again the next year.

**1. Assign groups and text segments:**

- Break students into subgroups (two pairs and a threesome). The pairs will have one struggling comprehender and either a typical or advanced comprehender, and the threesome will have one advanced, one typical, and one struggling comprehender.
- Assign each group certain segments of the text to analyze.
- Give each group charts with their assigned text segments.

**2. Explain the task:**

- The charts will have two columns, one for the text segments and one for the associated feelings.
- Ask students to read the text segments listed on their charts and decide whether Manuel is feeling good or bad about volunteering for the talent show. They should record this on their charts, beginning each sentence with “Manuel feels good/bad about volunteering because...” We will write “bad” feelings in red and “good” feelings in green.

**3. Model and practice the task:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about Manuel observing the other acts in the show. Fill in the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the closing segment of the story. Fill in the model chart.

“Manuel’s feelings change throughout the story, giving him overall mixed feelings about the experience. We need to pay attention to how he feels at different moments in the story. We’re going to reread and pay careful attention to how Manuel feels.”

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”</b>
<p>Page 166: <i>Manuel sat in a folding chair, twirling his record on his thumb. He watched a skit about personal hygiene, a mother-and-daughter violin duo, five first-grade girls jumping rope, a karate kid breaking boards, and a skit about the pilgrims. If the record player hadn’t been broken, he would have gone after the karate kid, an easy act to follow, he told himself.</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because he thinks he is just as good as the other acts and that he will do better than the karate kid.</p>

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”</b>
<p>Page 175: <i>He was relieved that the day was over. Next year, when they asked for volunteers for the talent show, he wouldn’t raise his hand.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because it was such a stressful day.</p>

**4. Circulate to scaffold and reinforce:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign feelings to certain segments and extend their reasoning.

**Text segment for threesome:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”</b>
<p>Page 166: <i>As he twirled his forty-five record, Manuel thought they had a great talent show. The entire school would be amazed. His mother and father would be proud, and his brothers and sisters would be jealous and pout. It would be a night to remember.</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because he is excited to be a part of something important and to be seen as a success by his family.</p>

<p>Page 172-3:  <i>Manuel remembered how the forty-five record had dropped from his hand and rolled across the cafeteria floor. It probably got scratched, he thought, and now it was stuck and he was stuck dancing and moving his lips to the same words over and over. He had never been so embarrassed. He would have to ask his parents to move the family out of town.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because he is embarrassed in front of his entire school and powerless to fix the situation.</p>
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**Text segment for pair 1:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”</b>
<p>Page 171:  <i>Manuel remained behind the stage shivering with fear. He mouthed the words to “La Bamba” and swayed from left to right. Why did he raise his hand and volunteer? Why couldn’t he have just sat there like the rest of the kids and not said anything?</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because he is nervous about going onstage and worried that he’ll mess up in front of the large audience.</p>
<p>Page 174:  <i>He was enjoying the limelight. A teacher brought him cookies and punch, and the popular kids who had never before given him the time of day now clustered around him.</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because all the important people want to be around him.</p>

**Text segment for pair 2:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”</b>
<p>Page 172:  <i>What am I doing here? thought Manuel. This is no fun at all. Everyone was just sitting there.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because the audience doesn’t seem into his act and he is disappointed in their response.</p>



Page 173: <i>After Mr. Roybal ripped the needle across the record, Manuel slowed his dance steps to a halt. He didn't know what to do except bow to the audience, which applauded wildly, and scoot off stage, on the verge of tears. This was worse than the homemade flashlight. At least no one laughed then, they just snickered.</i>	He feels bad about volunteering because the act went totally wrong and he is humiliated, even more than in first grade.
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### DAY 3

Goal	Activity	Important ideas	Big idea
Familiarize students with the FGA metalanguage	Model and practice the application of the FGA metalanguage to the text	Connectors, especially <i>but</i> ; Mixed feelings	People can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. Manuel's mixed feelings about performing in a school talent show will influence his decision about volunteering again the next year.

**1. Explain the FGA metalanguage:** “There are very small words that writers use that we might not think about much, but they’re very important. These words are called *connectors* because they connect words and sentences together in meaningful ways. The most common connectors are the words *and* and *but*.” [Below is a guiding script. As an aside, have everyone get the giggles out about the word ‘but’ so that we can move past that.]

***And:***

*And* usually adds to an idea by telling us more of the same. Sometimes it is used in a simple way, such as adding to a list of things in the same category: [Show examples, written on chart paper.]

*At the grocery store my mom bought eggs, apples, spinach, **and** juice.*

Here, the word *and* adds another food to the list of foods.

*I invited Mo, Fudwah, Ahlam, **and** Mazen to my birthday party.*

Here, the word *and* adds another friend to the list of people.

Sometimes it is used in a more complex way, connecting two ideas and saying they are similar.

*She was a kind person **and** never made fun of other kids.*

Here, the word *and* connects the idea of being a kind person with the idea of not making fun of people. It adds to the idea of kindness with an example. Here's another complex example.

*He was very disorganized **and** often running late.*

Here, the word *and* connects the idea of being disorganized with the idea of running late. It says the two ideas are similar.

***But:***

*But* usually indicates a change or something different, contrasting two ideas. Just like *and*, it can be used in simple ways. [Show examples, written on chart paper.]

*I like peanut butter, **but** not jelly.*

Here, the word *but* contrasts the idea of liking a food and disliking another food that often goes with it.

Sometimes *but* is used in more complex ways, showing that two ideas are different or that a change is occurring.

*I will go to the scary movie with you, **but** I won't enjoy it.*

Here, the word *but* shows that the person is willing to do something – go to a scary movie – even though it is not what they want to do, not what they enjoy doing.

*She was nervous, **but** excited about her swimming class.*

Here, the word *but* shows mixed feelings about something, nervousness and excitement about the same experience.

*He was sure he hadn't studied enough for the test, **but** then he realized he knew all the answers.*

Here, the word *but* shows his feelings changing, from fear of not having studied enough to confidence that he was doing well on the test.

Now let's think about Manuel and his mixed feelings about the talent show. He has good and bad feelings throughout the story, but there are certain parts when he experiences good and bad feelings at the same time, or when his feelings change all of a sudden. The author uses the word *but* to show this often. When we look at a spot like this, we have to consider all the feelings Manuel has in that moment, not just one. We're going to do the same activity as yesterday, but with segments that use the word *but* and describe more than one feeling.

**2. Model and practice applying the metalanguage to the text:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about Manuel when he is first on stage. Fill in the model chart.

- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segment about the record sticking. Fill in the model chart.

**Text segment for modeling:**

<p>Page 172:  <i>Some people were moving to the beat but most were just watching him, like they would a monkey at the zoo. But when Manuel did a fancy dance step, there was a burst of applause and some girls screamed.</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because some people seem to be enjoying his act.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels bad about volunteering because most people seem bored.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because people start to get excited when he starts dancing more.</p>
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**Text segment for practicing:**

<p>Page 172:  <i>Manuel tried another dance step. He heard more applause and screams and started getting into the groove as he shivered and snaked around stage. But the record got stuck, and he had to sing</i>  <i>Para bailar la bamba</i>  <i>Para bailar la bamba</i>  <i>Para bailar la bamba</i>  <i>Para bailar la bamba</i>  <i>again and again. Manuel couldn't believe his bad luck. The audience began to laugh and stand up in their chairs.</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because he is getting more confident when the audience responds to his dance moves.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels bad about volunteering because his act is getting messed up and people are laughing at him.</p>
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**3. Subgroups apply the metalanguage independently:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign feelings to certain places and extend their reasoning.

**Text segment for threesome:**

<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p><b>What this shows about Manuel's feelings "He feels good/bad about volunteering because..."</b></p>
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<p>Page 164:  <i>He was still amazed that he had volunteered. He was going to pretend to sing Ritchie Valen’s “La Bamba” before the entire school. Why did I raise my hand? he asked himself, but in his heart he knew the answer. He yearned for the limelight. He wanted applause as loud as a thunderstorm and to hear his friends say, “Man, that was bad!” And he wanted to impress the girls, especially Petra Lopez, the second-prettiest girl in his class.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because he is nervous about something going wrong in front of everyone he knows.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because it will get him the attention he wants from important people.</p>
<p>Page 174:  <i>Funny? Manuel thought. Did he do something funny? Funny. Crazy. Hilarious. These were the words people said to him. He was confused, but beyond caring. All he knew was that people were paying attention to him, and his brothers and sisters looked at him with a mixture of jealousy and awe.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because he doesn’t understand what people are saying to him about his act.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because he is getting the attention he wanted.</p>

**Text segment for pair 1:**

Text	What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”
<p>Page 168:  <i>In bed he prayed that he wouldn’t mess up. He prayed that it wouldn’t be like when he was a first-grader. For Science Week he had wired together a C battery and a bulb, and told everyone he had discovered how a flashlight worked. He was so pleased with himself that he practiced for hours pressing the wire to the battery, making the bulb wink a dim, orangish light. He showed it to so many kids in his neighborhood that when it was time to show his class how a flashlight worked, the battery was dead. He pressed the wire to the battery, but the bulb didn’t respond. He pressed until his thumb hurt and some kids in the back started snickering. But Manuel fell asleep confident that nothing would go wrong this time.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because the last time he did something like this, it was really embarrassing when it messed up.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because he thinks everything will go right this time.</p>
<p>Page 172:  <i>The cafeteria roared with applause. Manuel was nervous but loved the noisy crowd. He</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because he is scared of the large crowd looking at him.</p>

<p><i>pictured his mother and father applauding loudly and his brothers and sisters also clapping, though not as energetically.</i></p>	<p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because he is proud to be a part of something fun and exciting and to be seen as a success by his family.</p>
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**Text segment for pair 2:**

<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p><b>What this shows about Manuel’s feelings “He feels good/bad about volunteering because...”</b></p>
<p>Page 174: <i>Manuel stood alone, trying hard to hold back the tears as Benny, center stage, played his trumpet. Manuel was jealous because he sounded great, then mad as he recalled that it was Benny’s loud trumpet playing that made the forty-five record fly out of his hands. But when the entire cast lined up for a curtain call, Manuel received a burst of applause that was so loud it shook the walls of the cafeteria. Later, as he mingled with kids and parents, everyone patted him on the shoulder and told him, “Way to go. You were really funny.”</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because now he is alone and feels like crying, the opposite of what he wanted, while Benny is doing well and getting the attention he had wanted.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because everyone is cheering for him and patting him on the back.</p>
<p>Page 175: <i>Manuel, feeling happy, went to his bedroom, undressed, and slipped into his pajamas. He looked in the mirror and began to pantomime “La Bamba” but stopped because he was tired of the song. He crawled into bed. The sheets were as cold as the moon that stood over the peach tree in their backyard. He was relieved that the day was over.</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because it all turned out well in the end.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels bad about volunteering because the day had been so stressful for him.</p>

## DAY 4

Goal	Activity	Visual organizer	Big idea
Organize important information	Subgroups present their findings; Teacher uses a visual organizer to display group work; Group discusses the writing prompt	Timeline	People can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. Manuel’s mixed feelings about performing in a school talent show will influence his decision about volunteering again the next year.

### 1. Document student work as they report out on their analyses:

- Use a “timeline” chart with headings referring to important stages of the story: After volunteering; Rehearsal; During the show; After the show.
- Go through each stage and ask the groups to submit segments that go there. As they are offered, go over the analysis the groups did for each segment.
- We will consider whether Manuel’s feelings are good or bad during each stage, and in different segments of each stage. These will be visually represented by the green and red writing.
- This will result in a left-to-right representation of how Manuel’s feelings changed throughout the story, giving students a resource for evidence for the writing prompt and also representing the big idea in the text that people can have mixed feelings about something. The chart will simply have the information from the charts above presented linearly and divided according to different story stages. It will look something like this (but less dense due to it being on a much larger scale):

After volunteering		Rehearsal		During the show		After the show	
Page 164: <i>He was still amazed that he had volunteered. He was going to pretend to sing Ritchie Valen’s “La Bamba” before the</i>	He feels bad about volunteering because he is nervous about something going wrong in front of everyone he knows.	Page 166: <i>Manuel sat in a folding chair, twirling his record on his thumb. He watched a skit about</i>	He feels good about volunteering because he thinks he is just as good as the other acts and that he will do better than the	Page 171: <i>Manuel remained behind the stage shivering with fear. He mouthed the words to “La Bamba” and swayed from left</i>	He feels bad about volunteering because he is nervous about going onstage and worried that he’ll mess up in front of	Page 174: <i>Funny? Manuel thought. Did he do something funny? Crazy. Hilariou s. These were the</i>	He feels bad about volunteering because he doesn’t understand what people are saying to him about his act.

<p><i>entire school. Why did I raise my hand? he asked himself, but in his heart he knew the answer. He yearned for the limelight. He wanted applause as loud as a thunderstorm and to hear his friends say, "Man, that was bad!" And he wanted to impress the girls, especially Petra Lopez, the second-prettiest girl in his class.</i></p>	<p><b>BUT</b> He feels good about volunteering because it will get him the attention he wants from important people.</p>	<p><i>personal hygiene, a mother-and-daughter violin duo, five first-grade girls jumping rope, a karate kid breaking boards, and a skit about the pilgrims. If the record player hadn't been broken, he would have gone after the karate kid, an easy act to follow, he told himself.</i></p>	<p>karate kid.</p>	<p><i>to right. Why did he raise his hand and volunteer? Why couldn't he have just sat there like the rest of the kids and not said anything?</i></p>	<p>the large audience.</p>	<p><i>words people said to him. He was confused, but beyond caring. All he knew was that people were paying attention to him, and his brothers and sisters looked at him with a mixture of jealousy and awe.</i></p>	<p><b>BUT</b> He feels good about volunteering because he is getting the attention he wanted.</p>
<p>Page 168: <i>In bed he prayed that he</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering</p>	<p>Page 166: <i>As he twirled</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering</p>	<p>Page 172: <i>The cafeteria roared</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering</p>	<p>Page 174: <i>He was enjoying</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering</p>

<p>wouldn't mess up. He prayed that it wouldn't be like when he was a first-grader. For Science Week he had wired together a C battery and a bulb, and told everyone he had discovered how a flashlight worked. He was so pleased with himself that he practiced for hours pressing the wire to the battery, making the bulb wink a dim, orangish light. He showed it to so many kids in his neighborhood that when it was time</p>	<p>because the last time he did something like this, it was really embarrassing when it messed up.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because he thinks everything will go right this time.</p>	<p>his forty-five record, Manuel thought they had a great talent show. The entire school would be amazed. His mother and father would be proud, and his brothers and sisters would be jealous and pout. It would be a night to remember.</p>	<p>ng because he is excited to be a part of something important and to be seen as a success by his family.</p>	<p>with applause. Manuel was nervous but loved the noisy crowd. He pictured his mother and father applauding loudly and his brothers and sisters also clapping, though not as energetically.</p>	<p>because he is scared of the large crowd looking at him.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because he is proud to be a part of something fun and exciting and to be seen as a success by his family.</p>	<p>the limelight. A teacher brought him cookies and punch, and the popular kids who had never before given him the time of day now clustered around him.</p>	<p>ng because all the important people want to be around him.</p>
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<p><i>to show his class how a flashlight worked, the battery was dead. He pressed the wire to the battery, but the bulb didn't respond. He pressed until his thumb hurt and some kids in the back started snickering. But Manuel fell asleep confident that nothing would go wrong this time.</i></p>							
				<p>Page 172: <i>What am I doing here? thought Manuel. This is no fun at all. Everyone was just sitting there.</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because the audience doesn't seem into his act and he is disappointed in their response.</p>	<p>Page 175: <i>Manuel, feeling happy, went to his bedroom, undressed, and slipped into his pajamas. He looked</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because it all turned out well in the end.  BUT  He feels bad about volunteering</p>

						<p><i>in the mirror and began to pantomime “La Bamba” but stopped because he was tired of the song. He crawled into bed. The sheets were as cold as the moon that stood over the peach tree in their backyard. He was relieved that the day was over.</i></p>	<p>ng because the day had been so stressful for him.</p>
				<p>Page 172: <i>Some people were moving to the beat but most were just watching him, like</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because some people seem to be</p>	<p>Page 175: <i>He was relieved that the day was over. Next year, when</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because it was such a stressful day.</p>

				<p><i>they would a monkey at the zoo. But when Manuel did a fancy dance step, there was a burst of applause and some girls screamed.</i></p>	<p>enjoying his act.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels bad about volunteering because most people seem bored.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because people start to get excited when he starts dancing more.</p>	<p><i>they asked for volunteers for the talent show, he wouldn't raise his hand.</i></p>	
				<p>Page 172: <i>Manuel tried another dance step. He heard more applause and screams and started getting into the</i></p>	<p>He feels good about volunteering because he is getting more confident when the audience responds to his dance</p>		

				<p><i>groove as he shivered and snaked around stage. But the record got stuck, and he had to sing</i></p> <p><i>Para bailar la bamba</i></p> <p><i>Para bailar la bamba</i></p> <p><i>Para bailar la bamba</i></p> <p><i>Para bailar la bamba again and again. Manuel couldn't believe his bad luck. The audience began to laugh and stand up in their chairs.</i></p>	<p>moves.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels bad about volunteering because his act is getting messed up and people are laughing at him.</p>		
				<p>Page 172-3: <i>Manuel remembered how the forty-five</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because</p>		

				<p><i>record had dropped from his hand and rolled across the cafeteria floor. It probably got scratched, he thought, and now it was stuck and he was stuck dancing and moving his lips to the same words over and over. He had never been so embarrassed. He would have to ask his parents to move the family out of town.</i></p>	<p>he is embarrassed in front of his entire school and powerless to fix the situation.</p>		
				<p>Page 173: <i>After Mr. Roybal ripped the needle across the record, Manuel slowed his dance</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because the act went totally wrong and he is</p>		

				<p><i>steps to a halt. He didn't know what to do except bow to the audience, which applauded wildly, and scoot off stage, on the verge of tears. This was worse than the homemade flashlight. At least no one laughed then, they just snickered.</i></p>	<p>humiliated, even more than in first grade.</p>		
				<p>Page 174: <i>Manuel stood alone, trying hard to hold back the tears as Benny, center stage, played his trumpet. Manuel was jealous because he sounded great, then</i></p>	<p>He feels bad about volunteering because now he is alone and feels like crying, the opposite of what he wanted, while Benny is doing well and getting</p>		

				<p><i>mad as he recalled that it was Benny's loud trumpet playing that made the forty-five record fly out of his hands. But when the entire cast lined up for a curtain call, Manuel received a burst of applause that was so loud it shook the walls of the cafeteria. Later, as he mingled with kids and parents, everyone patted him on the shoulder and told him, "Way to go. You were really funny."</i></p>	<p>the attention he had wanted.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>He feels good about volunteering because everyone is cheering for him and patting him on the back.</p>		
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**2. Revisit the prompt:**

- Post two pieces of chart paper with the following headings:
  - *Manuel will volunteer for the talent show again next year.*
  - *Manuel will not volunteer for the talent show again next year.*
- Discuss the prompt as a group, prompting the use of information in the chart to support positions. This activity is intended to prime them to write, but not to be an exhaustive exploration of each position.

**DAY 5**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Prompt</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Engage in writing to the prompt	Students write responses to the prompt	Do you think that Manuel will volunteer for the talent show again next year? Why or why not?	People can have good and bad feelings about the same experience. Manuel’s mixed feelings about performing in a school talent show will influence his decision about volunteering again the next year.

**1. Present the writing prompt:**

- Remind students to state their position and use the text to support their answers.
- Explain that the objective is to write essays that could convince someone who has another position to change his/her mind.

**2. Students write to the prompt for the rest of the session:**

- Students will have access to the text and the visually organized information from previous days.
- Students will write totally independently, without teacher or peer input.



**McBroom and the Big Wind unit: FGA-supported text-based discussion**

**Big idea:** Something can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether or not we can control it. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, depending on who is more powerful.

**Writing prompt:** Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?

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**DAY 1**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Interactively read the text	Prime background knowledge about the concepts and theme; Introduce and read the text	Love/hate relationships; Different words for wind; Silly language and ideas in humorous texts	Something can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether or not we can control it. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, depending on who is more powerful.

**1. Describe the story and explore the theme:** “In the story *McBroom and the Big Wind*, a farmer named Josh McBroom tells us about how the strong wind on the prairie does unusual things in his family’s life. The family learns to use the strong wind to do some fun and helpful things, but also deals with some of the scary and destructive things the wind does.”

***Something being helpful or harmful, depending on control:***

- Explain the idea of a love/hate relationship: “Sometimes things have the potential to be helpful or harmful, depending on if we can control them. This can make us have a love/hate relationship with some things.”
- Provide an example of a love/hate relationship: “Here’s an example. Snow is something that I have a love/hate relationship with. I think it is very beautiful and when I am cozy in my house or appropriately dressed for outside I enjoy looking at it and playing in it. When I am driving in it or have to go somewhere in fancy clothes that are cold or shouldn’t get wet, I hate it. So when I have control of the situation – by staying cozy in my house or preparing myself to go out in it – I love it. But when the snow has control – by messing up the roads and how my car drives or by messing up my clothing or making me cold – I hate it.”
- Ask students if they have other examples they can think of.
- Connect the idea of love/hate relationships to the text/prompt: “Our feelings about things like this can change a lot as we experience them differently. We love them when we have control, and hate them when we don’t. McBroom and his family have that

experience with the wind, which is sometimes helpful and fun for them, and sometimes destructive and scary.”

**2. Prime background knowledge:** “Before we read, let’s discuss the many different words the author uses for the wind in this story, and some of the other unusual things the author does to make this story humorous.”

***Different words for wind:***

- Explain that this story uses many different words for “wind”: “There are many different words for wind. Some imply small winds, like ‘breeze,’ and others imply strong wind, like ‘blow.’ We’ll talk about these more as we read, but I also have a list here for you.”
- Provide a list of the words the story uses for “wind”: Wind, blow, draft, zephyr, breeze, gust[y], breath

***Silly language and ideas in humorous texts:***

- Explain how the text makes use of silliness to be entertaining: “The story is very silly and full of impossible happenings. The author uses silly ideas and language to make us laugh. Some of these things can be confusing though, so we’re going to read through it together very carefully and spend some extra time on the confusing parts.”
- Explain the idea of *plays on words*: “There are parts in this story when the author makes a ‘play on words.’ That is when a word is used in a way that is silly because it is making use of another meaning of the word to be funny. We’ll find examples of this together.”
- Explain the idea of *exaggeration*: “There are times in this story when things are described in ways that show a big idea – like how powerful the wind is – but what is being said is impossible. The words are exaggerating, or representing the truth as bigger than it really is. We’ll find examples of this together.”

***Dialect:***

- Explain that people can speak the same language, but in different countries or areas of the country, they might speak it somewhat differently. Even across age groups or areas of a neighborhood there might be differences. These differences might be in specific words used, how the words are put together, or sayings they use.
- Emphasize that the dialect McBroom uses in this story is one of a prairie farmer, so things are phrased differently and some unusual words are used. This makes the story seem like a farmer is authentically talking to us, but can make it tricky to read at times.

**3. Read the text:** “When we read, I want you to pay attention to what the wind is doing and whether the family or the wind is in control.”

***Stopping points:***

p. 360 “mite” – bit; tiny amount

p. 360 “Came back for the cow” – example of the story’s silliness... Implies the wind enjoyed the milk so much, it came back for the cow.

p. 360 “howlin’ scowlin’” – example of the story’s fun with language

p. 360 “No account, really.” – no big deal.

- p. 360 “distinctly” – clearly
- p. 360 “rich topsoil” – the earth right on top, in which seed are planted and grow... When it is rich that means it is great for growing things because it has lots of nutrients and moisture.
- p. 360 “those nails grew a full half-inch” – example of the story’s silliness... Saying “there isn’t a thing that won’t grow in our rich topsoil” implies plants, but the author is pretending that literally **everything** grows in it, even nails!
- p. 361 “shingles” – pieces of roof
- p. 361 “shooting marbles” – a game in which you use your fingers to fling marbles so they roll on the ground at other marbles
- p. 361 “stout” – strong
- p. 362 “young’uns” – kids
- p. 362 “Willjillhesterchesterpeterpollytimtommarylarryandlittleclarinda” – example of the story’s fun with language... All the names are strung together without spaces to show how quickly he names all his children when calling for them.
- p. 362 “scamper” – move quickly
- p. 362 “A prairie wind has no manners at all!” – example of the story’s silliness... The wind is blowing into the house, but the author is sort-of personifying it, acting like it is a person who is being rude by coming in uninvited.
- p. 362 “We slammed the door in its teeth. Now, the wind didn’t take that politely.” – a similar example of the story’s silliness... Wind doesn’t have teeth, of course, but the saying means they slammed the door right on it, like in its face if it had a face. So the wind got offended and became even more aggressive. All this language is acting like the wind is a person with a brain and feelings, which is sort of silly.
- p. 362 “trembled” – shook
- p. 362 “my lambs” – an affectionate name for his children, like “sweetie” or “habibi”
- p. 362 “barrel staves” – the wooden planks of a barrel that curve [draw a picture]; Imagine the door bending like that!
- p. 362 “her biscuits *are* terribly heavy” – example of the story’s silliness... Biscuits can be criticized for being “heavy” instead of light and fluffy, but the author is exaggerating that here to be funny. They aren’t like big heavy rocks!
- p. 363 “wondrous” – amazing; wonderful
- p. 363 “thieving” – likely to steal
- p. 363 “apt to make off with it” – likely to steal it
- p. 363 “trifling” – pathetic; useless
- p. 363 “butting its fool head against the door” – example of the story’s silliness... Again, the author is personifying the wind, which doesn’t really have a head.
- p. 363 “whisked” – moved quickly in a sudden change of direction
- p. 363 “fence pickets” – pieces of wood that form a fence [draw a picture]
- p. 363 “popeyed” – eyes opened wide in disbelief or amazement
- p. 363 “glee” – intense joy and happiness
- p. 363 “wonder” – amazement
- p. 363 “the marbles had grown as large as boulders” – example of the story’s silliness... Again, the implication is that **anything** grows in this topsoil, even marbles!

- p. 363 “agates” and “glassies” – types of marbles
- p. 364 “rambunctious” – wild and jumpy
- p. 364 “shingled every gopher hole” – example of story’s silliness... The shingles, or pieces of roof, were dropped everywhere, including on top of holes in the ground that animals live in.
- p. 364 “was an education to me” – taught me something
- p. 364 “There are two sides to every flapjack.” – A flapjack is a pancake. He means there are two ways of looking at everything. This is kind of the theme of the story – the wind is both helpful and harmful.
- p. 364 “let it know who’s boss” – a saying that refers to an effort to take back the power or control
- p. 364 “plow” – a tool that drags through soil to make it soft for planting
- p. 365 “tacking to and fro” – “Tacking” is a sailing term meaning turning the sail so that the wind moves the boat... Here he means he’s using the wind to move the plow back and forth over the fields.
- p. 365 “plowed the entire farm in under three minutes” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 365 “pluck” – pull out the feathers
- p. 365 “the wind plucked that turkey clean” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 365 “skillets” – wide frying pans
- p. 365 “Out in the breeze those shoes felt light as feathers.” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 366 “clumping” – walking with heavy feet
- p. 366 “funnel” – a tool for getting things to pass through a small hole [draw a picture]
- p. 366 “They’d cork the containers jam full of prairie wind.” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 366 “windproof” – prepare to stand up against the wind
- p. 366 “buttercups” – a type of flower
- p. 366 “My, they were slippery – all that butter, I guess. The wind would slip and slide over the farm without being able to get a purchase on the topsoil.” – example of the story’s silliness... This is a play on words with “butter.” Buttercups aren’t really made of butter. They are named for their yellow color.
- p. 366 “There were a few jackrabbits and crows flying backward through the air. Nothing out of the ordinary.” – example of the story’s silliness... This should be a crazy, sight, not something “ordinary.” But the author is implying this is seen all the time in this windy region.
- p. 366 “laying up” – storing
- p. 367 “ornery” – angry
- p. 367 “trooping” – moving in a big group
- p. 367 “with the hens still in it” – example of the story’s silliness... The hens would be flying around if this was a tornado. The whole henhouse couldn’t fly up in one piece with the

- hens still in it!
- p. 367 “chattered” – made little glassy tinkling sounds from shaking
- p. 367 “turned out they were timber wolves from up north” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 367 “out rolled a black bear” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 368 “mere” – simple
- p. 368 “huddled” – hugged in a big close group
- p. 368 “haste” – rush
- p. 368 “calculate” – factor; consider; account for
- p. 368 “the wind bent it like an angle iron” – An “angle iron” is an L-shaped piece of metal used in construction; an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 368 “brace of ducks” – group of geese
- p. 368 “carried away like a string of sausages” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 369 “fainted” – passed out; lost consciousness
- p. 369 “fetched” – got
- p. 369 “fancy” – like
- p. 369 “tangling” – fighting
- p. 369 “county seat” – government building with offices
- p. 369 “charged” – ran
- p. 369 “jumped red-hot pepper” – jumped up and down super fast
- p. 369 “I figured I could fly after the young’uns” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 370 “Tarnation!” – an exclamation of being upset
- p. 370 “furrow” – long hole in the dirt
- p. 370 “it wouldn’t surprise me to see the sun blown off course” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 371 “clearing” – getting past
- p. 371 “spurted” – move in a sudden forceful stream
- p. 371 “dig my heels into the earth” – force feet into the ground to stay stable
- p. 371 “I had to drag them home on the rope like balloons on a string” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 372 “shoulder” – push forcefully through an obstacle
- p. 372 “rascals” – mischievous people
- p. 372 “the next morning that bear was still jumping rope...he had lost so much weight he was skin and bones” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 373 “cut him loose” – freed him; let him go

- p. 373 “tuckered out” – tired
- p. 373 “he had lost the fine art of walking” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 373 “It had not only pulled up the fence posts, but the **holes** as well.” – an example of the story’s silliness... The author is exaggerating. There is no way that is possible.
- p. 373 “Josh McBroom would rather break his leg than tell a fib.” – This is a funny last line because the whole thing sounds like fibs, and his leg *is* broken, so maybe the whole story is a fib?

**4. Reveal writing prompt:** Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?

**DAY 2**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Reread the text and gather important information	Subgroups reread segments of the text to identify what the wind and the family are each doing	Participants; Love/hate relationships	Something can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether or not we can control it. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, depending on who is more powerful.

**1. Assign groups and text segments:**

- Break students into subgroups (two pairs and a threesome). The pairs will have one struggling comprehender and either a typical or advanced comprehender, and the threesome will have one advanced, one typical, and one struggling comprehender.
- Assign each group certain segments of the text to analyze.
- Give each group charts with their assigned text segments.

**2. Explain the task:**

- The charts will have four columns, one for the identified text, two for the wind and family actions, and one for identifying who is more powerful.
- Ask students to read the text segments listed on their charts and decide what the wind is doing and what the family is doing. They should record these ideas on their charts in the appropriate column. They should then decide who is more powerful in the segment, beginning each sentence with “McBroom/The family/Mama/the wind/etc. is more powerful because...”

**3. Model and practice the task:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about the strong storm that chased them into the house. Fill in the model chart.

- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Continue with the segment about the strong storm that chased them into the house. Fill in the model chart.

“The wind is an important presence in this story – like a main character. We can consider the wind a participant – someone or something that is part of the action in the text – even though it is not a person or animal. We need to pay attention to what McBroom and his family are doing, but also to what the wind is doing. We’re going to reread and pay careful attention to the actions of these participants, and who is more powerful as they struggle with each other.” [The yellow/red/green highlights below are part of Day 3 and Day 4 work. The gray highlights indicate additional segments I will give groups if time permits.]

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is the wind doing?</b>	<b>What are McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>Which participant is more powerful?</b>
Page 361-2: <i>The clothesline was already beginning to whip around like a jump rope. My dear wife, Melissa, who had been baking a heap of biscuits, threw open the door. In we dashed and not a moment too soon. The wind was snapping at our heels like a pack of wolves. It aimed to barge right in and make itself at home! A prairie wind has no manners at all.</i>	The wind is whipping the clothesline around.  The wind chases them and tries to get into the house.	McBroom runs into the house with his kids.	The wind is more powerful because it chases the family inside.

<p>Page 361-2:  <i>We slammed the door in its teeth. Now, the wind didn't take that politely. It rammed and battered at the door while all of us pushed and shoved to hold the door shut. My, it was a battle! How the house creaked and trembled!</i></p> <p><i>"Push, my lambs!" I yelled. "Shove!"</i></p> <p><i>At times the door planks bent like barrel staves. But we held that roaring wind out.</i></p>	<p>The wind blows against the door, shaking the house, and bending the door.</p>	<p>McBroom is trying to hold the door shut and yells for his kids to help him.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they hold the wind out.</p>
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**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is the wind doing?</b>	<b>What are McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>Which participant is more powerful?</b>
<p>Page 362-4:  <i>When it saw there was no getting past us, the zephyr sneaked around the house to the back door. However, our oldest boy, Will, was too smart for it. He piled Mama's heap of fresh biscuits against the back door. My dear wife, Melissa, is a wonderful cook, but her biscuits <b>are</b> terribly heavy. They make a splendid door stop.</i></p>	<p>The wind moves to blow against the back door of the house.</p>	<p>Will piles biscuits against the door to hold the wind out.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they hold the wind out.</p>



<p>Page 362-4:  <i>“Shove, my lambs!” I said.  “Push!”</i></p> <p><i>The battle raged on for an hour. Finally the wind gave up butting its fool head against the door. With a great angry sigh it turned and whisked itself away, scattering fence pickets as it went.</i></p>	<p>The wind stops the fight and leaves, but it breaks the fence as it goes.</p>	<p>McBroom yells at his kids to help him keep the wind out.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because the wind gives up.</p>
<p>Page 362-4:  <i>We all took a deep breath and I opened the door a crack. Hardly a leaf now stirred on the ground. A bird began to twitter. I rushed outside to our poor one-acre farm.</i></p> <p><i>But that rambunctious wind didn't leave empty-handed. It ripped off our new shingle roof. Pulled out the nails, too. We found out later the wind had shingled every gopher hole in the next county.</i></p>	<p>The wind pulled off the roof and dropped pieces of it everywhere.</p>	<p>The family takes a deep breath and opens the door. McBroom goes outside to check on the farm and sees the destroyed roof.</p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it wrecked their roof.</p>

**4. Circulate to scaffold and reinforce:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign actions and power to certain segments and extend their reasoning.

**Text segment for threesome:**

Text	What is the wind doing?	What are McBroom and his family doing?	Which participant is more powerful?
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<p>Page 364-6:  <i>The next gusty day that came along, we put it to work for us. I made a wind plow. I rigged a bedsheet and tackle to our old farm plow. Soon as a breeze sprung up I'd go tacking to and fro over the farm, plowing as I went. Our son Chester once plowed the entire farm in under three minutes.</i></p>	<p>The wind blows the plow around the field.</p>	<p>McBroom and his son use the wind to blow a plow around his farm like a sailboat.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they use the wind to plow their fields.</p>
<p>Page 364-6:  <i>On Thanksgiving morning Mama told the girls to pluck a large turkey for dinner. They didn't much like that chore, but a prairie gust arrived just in time. The girls stuck the turkey out the window. The wind plucked that turkey clean, pinfeathers and all.</i></p>	<p>The wind plucks the Thanksgiving turkey.</p>	<p>The girls hold the turkey out the window for the wind to pluck.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they use the wind to pluck their turkey.</p>
<p>Page 364-6:  <i>Oh, we got downright glad to see a blow come along. The young'uns were always wanting to go out and play in the wind, but Mama was afraid they'd be carried off. So I made them wind shoes – made 'em out of heavy iron skillets. Out in the breeze those shoes felt light as feathers. The girls would jump rope with the clothesline. The wind spun the rope, of course.</i></p>	<p>The wind blows the clothesline like a jump rope.</p>	<p>The kids play in the wind.   Mama worries about the kids getting carried off in the wind.   McBroom makes wind shoes to keep the kids on the ground even in the wind.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they use the wind for their play and games.</p>

<p>Page 364-6:  <i>Many a time I saw the youngsters put on their wind shoes and go clumping outside with a big tin funnel and all the empty bottles and jugs they could round up. They'd cork the containers jam full of prairie wind.</i></p> <p><i>Then, come summer, when there wasn't a breath of air, they'd uncork a bottle or two of fresh winter wind and enjoy the cool breeze.</i></p>	<p>The wind cools them off on hot summer days.</p>	<p>The kids catch the wind in bottles and then open the bottles on hot summer days.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they capture the wind in bottles.</p>
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**Text segment for pair 1:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is the wind doing?</b>	<b>What are McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?</b>
<p>Page 366-70:  <i>Of course, we had to windproof the farm every fall. We'd plant the field in buttercups. My, they were slippery – all that butter, I guess. The wind would slip and slide over the farm without being able to get a purchase on the topsoil. By then the boys and I had reshingled the roof. We used screws instead of nails.</i></p>	<p>The wind slips over the fields.</p>	<p>The family windproofs the farm to protect the soil.</p> <p>McBroom and the boys reshingled the roof.</p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they windproofed the farm.</p>

<p>Page 366-70:  <i>Outside, the wind was picking up ground speed and scattering fence posts as it went.</i></p> <p><i>“Willjillhesterchesterpeterpollytintommarylarryandlittl eclarinda!” I shouted.</i>  <i>“Inside, my lambs! That wind is getting ornery!”</i></p> <p><i>The young’uns came trooping in and pulled off their wind shoes. And not a moment too soon. The clothesline began to whip around so fast it seemed to disappear. Then we saw a hen house come flying through the air, with the hens still in it.</i></p> <p><i>The sky was turning dark and mean. The wind came out of the far north, howling and shrieking and shaking the house. In the cupboard, cups chattered in their saucers.</i></p>	<p>The wind speeds up and breaks the fence.</p> <p>The wind whips the clothesline faster and blows a henhouse into the air.</p> <p>The wind is making noises and shaking the house.</p>	<p>McBroom is yelling to the kids to get inside and out of the wind.</p> <p>McBroom and the kids come inside.</p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it chases the family inside.</p>
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<p>Page 366-70:  <i>I got down my shotgun and opened a window. That was a <b>mistake!</b> Two things happened at once. The bear was coming on and in my haste I forgot to calculate the direction of the wind. It came shrieking along the side of the house and when I poked the gunbarrel out the window, well, the wind bent it like an angle iron. That buckshot flew due south. I found out later it brought down a brace of ducks over Mexico.</i></p>	<p>The wind bends the gunbarrel.</p>	<p>McBroom is trying to shoot the bear.</p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it messes him up shooting the bear.</p>
<p>Page 366-70:  <i>But worse than that, when I threw open the window such a draft came in that our young'uns <b>were sucked up through the chimney!</b> Holding hands, they were carried away like a string of sausages.</i></p> <p><i>Mama near fainted away. "My dear Melissa," I exclaimed, "Don't you worry! I'll get our young'uns back!"</i></p> <p><i>I fetched a rope and rushed outside. I could see the young'uns up in the sky and blowing south.</i></p>	<p>The wind sucks the kids out of the house through the chimney.</p> <p>The wind is carrying the kids off in the sky.</p>	<p>McBroom assures his wife that he will save the children.</p> <p>McBroom gets a rope and goes after his children.</p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it carries off the children.</p>

**Text segment for pair 2:**

Text	What is the wind doing?	What are McBroom and his family doing?	Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?
<p>Page 370-3:  <i>The young'uns were almost out of sight. I rushed to the barn for the wind plow. Once out in the breeze, the bedsheet filled with wind. Off I shot like a cannonball, plowing a deep furrow as I went.</i></p> <p><i>Didn't I streak along, though! I was making better time than the young'uns. I kept my hands on the plow handles and steered around barns and farmhouses.</i></p> <p><i>I plowed right along and gained rapidly on the young'uns. They were still holding hands and just clearing the tree tops. Before long I was within hailing distance.</i></p>	<p>The wind is blowing the kids over the trees and blowing McBroom on his plow.</p>	<p>McBroom is riding his wind-powered plow, trying to catch the kids.</p>	<p>McBroom is more powerful because he is using the wind to catch up to his children.</p>
<p>Page 370-3:  <i>I spurted after them until their shadows lay across my path. But the bedsheet was so swelled out with wind that I couldn't stop the plow. Before I could let go of the handles and jump off I had sailed far <b>ahead</b> of the young-uns.</i></p>	<p>The wind is blowing the plow so fast, it is blowing McBroom past the kids.</p>	<p>McBroom is trying to catch the kids, but he speeds past them.</p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because McBroom can't control the speed of his plow.</p>

<p>Page 370-3:  <i>Hester missed the rope, and Jill missed the rope, and so did Peter. But Will caught it. I had to dig my heels in the earth to hold them. And then I started back. The young'uns were too light for the wind. They hung in the air. I had to drag them home on the rope like balloons on a string.</i></p> <p><i>Of course it took most of the day to shoulder my way back through the wind. It was a mighty struggle I tell you! It was near suppertime when we saw our farmhouse ahead, and that black bear was still jumping rope!</i></p>	<p>It is blowing the kids so strongly, McBroom is struggling to pull them down.</p> <p>The wind is so strong that McBroom has to pull and pull to overpower it and get the kids home.</p>	<p>McBroom throws them a rope and begins pulling them home.</p> <p>McBroom pulls the kids home safe on a rope, struggling against the power of the wind.</p>	<p>McBroom is more powerful because he manages to pull the kids home.</p>
<p>Page 370-3:  <i>That was the howlin', scowlin' all mighty <b>big</b> wind that broke my leg. It had not only pulled up fence posts, but the <b>holes</b> as well. It dropped one of those holes right outside the barn door and I stepped in it.</i></p>	<p>The wind breaks the fence and scatters the fence post holes all around, which trips McBroom and breaks his leg.</p>	<p>McBroom steps in a fence post hole and breaks his leg.</p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it messed up the farm and caused McBroom to fall in a hole and break his leg.</p>

### DAY 3

Goal	Activity	Important ideas	Big idea
Familiarize students with the FGA metalanguage	Model and practice the application of the FGA metalanguage to the text	Participants; Personification	Something can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether or not we can control it. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, depending on who is more powerful.

**1. Explain the FGA metalanguage:** “Authors can create characters that are not people or animals by making them frequent *participants* in the sentences. Anything that is part of the action in a sentence is a participant in the sentence. If something is an important participant in many of the sentences, it gets developed as an important character.” [Below is a guiding script.]

***Participants in sentences:***

Participants don’t have to be people or animals. Sometimes *things* perform an action: [Show examples, written on chart paper.]

*The door opened slowly.*

*The car would not start.*

*The water flowed all over the floor.*

[Talk about each of these examples, highlighting that the participants are things that are performing actions in the sentences, even though they aren’t people or animals.]

Sometimes participants perform an action on *things*: [Show examples, written on chart paper.]

*Mary slammed the door.*

*The mechanic repaired the car.*

*I cleaned up the water.*

[Talk about each of these examples, highlighting that the participants are the same things, but that in these sentences, they are receiving the actions, even though they aren’t people or animals.]

***Main participants in texts & personification:***

Sometimes a participant like this becomes a very important presence in the text. If the participant is mentioned again and again or is part of important events in the text, it might be an important participant, becoming a character in the story. The wind in *McBroom and the Big*



*Wind* is an example. It is mentioned on every page, even the title, and we saw yesterday that it performs and receives a lot of actions in the text.

One of the ways an author can make something an important participant when it is not a person or animal is to use *personification*. This is when a thing is described in ways that make it seem like a living person or animal. Authors might say things like, *The storm roared outside the window*. The word “roar” makes us think of a living thing, so it personifies the storm. Another example might be, *The broken car crawled along the freeway*. Cars don’t actually ‘crawl’ because they don’t have arms and legs, but using this word personifies the car and makes it seem like it is struggling to move.

The wind is an important participant in this story. Part of how the author sets up the wind as a character is by *personifying* it. We’re going to look back at some of the segments we worked on yesterday and look for examples of personification.”

**2. Model and practice applying the metalanguage to the text:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the first segment from the model chart. Highlight the appropriate words on the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the second segment from the model chart. Highlight the appropriate words on the model chart.

**Text segment for modeling:**

Text	What is the wind doing?	What are McBroom and his family doing?	Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?
Page 361-2: <i>The clothesline was already beginning to whip around like a jump rope. My dear wife, Melissa, who had been baking a heap of biscuits, threw open the door. In we dashed and not a moment too soon. The wind was snapping at our heels like a pack of wolves. It aimed to barge right in and make itself at home! A prairie wind has no manners at all.</i>	The wind is whipping the clothesline around.  The wind chases them and tries to get into the house.	McBroom runs into the house with his kids.	McBroom thinks the wind is bad because it is chasing them and trying to bust into their house.

**Text segment for practicing:**

Text	What is the	What are	Who is more powerful, the
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	<b>wind doing?</b>	<b>McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>wind or the McBrooms?</b>
<p>Page 361-2:  <i>We slammed the door in its teeth. Now, the wind didn't take that politely. It rammmed and battered at the door while all of us pushed and shoved to hold the door shut. My, it was a battle! How the house creaked and trembled!</i></p> <p><i>"Push, my lambs!" I yelled. "Shove!"</i></p> <p><i>At times the door planks bent like barrel staves. But we held that roaring wind out.</i></p>	<p>The wind blows against the door, shaking the house, and bending the door.</p>	<p>McBroom is trying to hold the door shut and yells for his kids to help him.</p>	<p>The family thinks the wind is bad because it is trying to bust into their house.</p>

**3. Subgroups apply the metalanguage independently:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they identify examples of personification.

**Text segment for threesome:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is the wind doing?</b>	<b>What are McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?</b>

<p>Page 362-4:  <i>When it saw there was no getting past us, the zephyr sneaked around the house to the back door. However, our oldest boy, Will, was too smart for it. He piled Mama's heap of fresh biscuits against the back door. My dear wife, Melissa, is a wonderful cook, but her biscuits <b>are</b> terribly heavy. They make a splendid door stop.</i></p>	<p>The wind moves to blow against the back door of the house.</p>	<p>Will piles biscuits against the door to hold the wind out.</p>	<p>The family thinks the wind is bad because it is trying to bust into their house.</p>
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**Text segment for pair 1:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is the wind doing?</b>	<b>What are McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?</b>
<p>Page 362-4:  <i>"Shove, my lambs!" I said. "Push!"</i></p> <p><i>The battle raged on for an hour. Finally the wind gave up butting its fool head against the door. With a great angry sigh it turned and whisked itself away, scattering fence pickets as it went.</i></p>	<p>The wind stops the fight and leaves, but it breaks the fence as it goes.</p>	<p>McBroom worries that the wind will steal his topsoil.</p> <p>McBroom yells at his kids to help him keep the wind out.</p>	<p>McBroom thinks the wind is bad because it might try to steal their wonderful topsoil.</p>

**Text segment for pair 2:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is the wind doing?</b>	<b>What are McBroom and his family doing?</b>	<b>Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?</b>

<p>Page 362-4:  <i>We all took a deep breath and I opened the door a crack. Hardly a leaf now stirred on the ground. A bird began to twitter. I rushed outside to our poor one-acre farm.</i></p> <p><i>But that rambunctious wind didn't leave empty-handed. It ripped off our new shingle roof. Pulled out the nails, too. We found out later the wind had shingled every gopher hole in the next county.</i></p>	<p>The wind pulled off the roof and dropped pieces of it everywhere.</p>	<p>The family takes a deep breath and opens the door. McBroom goes outside to check on the farm and sees the destroyed roof.</p>	<p>The family thinks the wind is bad because they are all afraid of it.</p> <p>McBroom thinks the wind is bad because it is so destructive to his farm.</p>
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#### DAY 4

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Visual organizer</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
<p>Organize important information</p>	<p>Subgroups present their findings; Teacher uses a visual organizer to display group work; Group discusses the writing prompt</p>	<p>Text segment chart, highlighting “wind” and “McBroom(s)” for the power column</p>	<p>Something can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether or not we can control it. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, depending on who is more powerful.</p>

#### **1. Document student work as they report out on their analyses:**

- Use a “timeline” chart with headings referring to important stages of the story: Storm 1; Between storms; Storm 2.
- Go through each stage and ask the groups to submit segments that go there. As they are offered, go over the analysis the groups did for each segment.
- We will consider who is more powerful during each stage, and in different segments of each stage. These will be visually represented highlighting in two different colors or marking with “W” and “McB” post-its.
- This will result in a left-to-right representation of the changing power dynamics throughout the story, giving students a resource for evidence for the writing prompt and also representing the big idea in the text that something can be helpful or harmful, depending on if we can control it. The chart will simply have the information from the

charts above presented linearly and divided according to different story stages. It will look something like this (but less dense due to it being on a much larger scale):

Storm 1		Between storms		Storm 2	
Page 361-2: <i>The clothesline was already beginning to whip around like a jump rope. My dear wife, Melissa, who had been baking a heap of biscuits, threw open the door. In we dashed and not a moment too soon. The wind was snapping at our heels like a pack of wolves. It aimed to barge right in and make itself at home! A prairie wind has no manners at all.</i>	The wind is more powerful because it chases the family inside.	Page 364-6: <i>The next gusty day that came along, we put it to work for us. I made a wind plow. I rigged a bedsheet and tackle to our old farm plow. Soon as a breeze sprung up I'd go tacking to and fro over the farm, plowing as I went. Our son Chester once plowed the entire farm in under three minutes.</i>	The family is more powerful because they use the wind to plow their fields.	Page 366-70: <i>Outside, the wind was picking up ground speed and scattering fence posts as it went.</i>  <i>"Willjillhest erchesterpet erpollytimto mmarylarry andlittleclarinda!" I shouted.</i> <i>"Inside, my lambs! That wind is getting ornery!"</i>  <i>The young'uns came trooping in and pulled off their wind shoes. And not a moment too soon. The clothesline began to whip around so fast it seemed to disappear. Then we saw a hen</i>	The wind is more powerful because it chases the family inside.

				<p><i>house come flying through the air, with the hens still in it.</i></p> <p><i>The sky was turning dark and mean. The wind came out of the far north, howling and shrieking and shaking the house. In the cupboard, cups chattered in their saucers.</i></p>	
<p>Page 361-2: <i>We slammed the door in its teeth. Now, the wind didn't take that politely. It rammed and battered at the door while all of us pushed and shoved to hold the door shut. My, it was a battle! How the house creaked and trembled!</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they hold the wind out.</p>	<p>Page 364-6: <i>On Thanksgiving morning Mama told the girls to pluck a large turkey for dinner. They didn't much like that chore, but a prairie gust arrived just in time. The girls stuck the turkey out the window. The wind plucked that turkey</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they use the wind to pluck their turkey.</p>	<p>Page 366-70: <i>I got down my shotgun and opened a window. That was a <b>mistake!</b> Two things happened at once. The bear was coming on and in my haste I forgot to calculate the direction of the wind. It came shrieking along the</i></p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it messes him up shooting the bear.</p>

<p><i>“Push, my lambs!” I yelled. “Shove!”</i></p> <p><i>At times the door planks bent like barrel staves. But we held that roaring wind out.</i></p>		<p><i>clean, pinfeathers and all.</i></p>		<p><i>side of the house and when I poked the gunbarrel out the window, well, the wind bent it like an angle iron. That buckshot flew due south. I found out later it brought down a brace of ducks over Mexico.</i></p>	
<p>Page 362-4: <i>When it saw there was no getting past us, the zephyr sneaked around the house to the back door. However, our oldest boy, Will, was too smart for it. He piled Mama’s heap of fresh biscuits against the back door. My dear wife,</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they hold the wind out.</p>	<p>Page 364-6: <i>Oh, we got downright glad to see a blow come along. The young’uns were always wanting to go out and play in the wind, but Mama was afraid they’d be carried off. So I made them wind shoes – made ‘em out of heavy iron skilletts. Out in the breeze those</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they use the wind for their play and games.</p>	<p>Page 366-70: <i>But worse than that, when I threw open the window such a draft came in that our young-uns were <b>sucked up through the chimney!</b> Holding hands, they were carried away like a string of sausages.</i>  <i>Mama near fainted</i></p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it carries off the children.</p>

<p><i>Melissa, is a wonderful cook, but her biscuits are terribly heavy. They make a splendid door stop.</i></p>		<p><i>shoes felt light as feathers. The girls would jump rope with the clothesline. The wind spun the rope, of course.</i></p>		<p><i>away. "My dear Melissa," I exclaimed, "Don't you worry! I'll get our young'uns back!"</i></p> <p><i>I fetched a rope and rushed outside. I could see the young'uns up in the sky and blowing south.</i></p>	
<p>Page 362-4:  <i>"Shove, my lambs!" I said. "Push!"</i></p> <p><i>The battle raged on for an hour. Finally the wind gave up butting its fool head against the door. With a great angry sigh it turned and whisked itself away, scattering fence pickets as it went.</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because the wind gives up.</p>	<p>Page 364-6:  <i>Many a time I saw the youngsters put on their wind shoes and go clumping outside with a big tin funnel and all the empty bottles and jugs they could round up. They'd cork the containers jam full of prairie wind.</i></p> <p><i>Then, come summer, when there</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they capture the wind in bottles.</p>	<p>Page 370-3:  <i>The young'uns were almost out of sight. I rushed to the barn for the wind plow. Once out in the breeze, the bedsheet filled with wind. Off I shot like a cannonball, plowing a deep furrow as I went.</i></p> <p><i>Didn't I streak along, though! I was making better time</i></p>	<p>McBroom is more powerful because he is using the wind to catch up to his children.</p>



		<p><i>wasn't a breath of air, they'd uncork a bottle or two of fresh winter wind and enjoy the cool breeze.</i></p>		<p><i>than the young'uns. I kept my hands on the plow handles and steered around barns and farmhouses.</i></p> <p><i>I plowed right along and gained rapidly on the young'uns. They were still holding hands and just clearing the tree tops. Before long I was within hailing distance.</i></p>	
<p>Page 362-4: <i>We all took a deep breath and I opened the door a crack. Hardly a leaf now stirred on the ground. A bird began to twitter. I rushed outside to our poor one-acre farm.</i></p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it wrecked their roof.</p>	<p>Page 366-70: <i>Of course, we had to windproof the farm every fall. We'd plant the field in buttercups. My, they were slippery – all that butter, I guess. The wind would slip and slide over</i></p>	<p>The family is more powerful because they windproofed the farm.</p>	<p>Page 370-3: <i>I spurted after them until their shadows lay across my path. But the bedsheet was so swelled out with wind that I couldn't stop the plow. Before I could let go of the handles and</i></p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because McBroom can't control the speed of his plow.</p>

<p><i>But that rambunctious wind didn't leave empty-handed. It ripped off our new shingle roof. Pulled out the nails, too. We found out later the wind had shingled every gopher hole in the next county.</i></p>		<p><i>the farm without being able to get a purchase on the topsoil. By then the boys and I had reshingled the roof. We used screws instead of nails.</i></p>		<p><i>jump off I had sailed far <b>ahead</b> of the young-uns.</i></p>	
				<p>Page 370-3: <i>Hester missed the rope, and Jill missed the rope, and so did Peter. But Will caught it. I had to dig my heels in the earth to hold them. And then I started back. The young'uns were too light for the wind. They hung in the air. I had to drag them home on the</i></p>	<p>McBroom is more powerful because he manages to pull the kids home.</p>

				<p><i>rope like balloons on a string.</i></p> <p><i>Of course it took most of the day to shoulder my way back through the wind. It was a mighty struggle I tell you! It was near suppertime when we saw our farmhouse ahead, and that black bear was still jumping rope!</i></p>	
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				<p>Page 370-3:  <i>That was the howlin', scowlin' all mighty <b>big</b> wind that broke my leg. It had not only pulled up fence posts, but the <b>holes</b> as well. It dropped one of those holes right outside the barn door and I stepped in it.</i></p>	<p>The wind is more powerful because it messed up the farm and caused McBroom to fall in a hole and break his leg.</p>
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**2. Revisit the prompt:**

- Post two pieces of chart paper with the following headings:
  - *The wind is more powerful.*
  - *The McBrooms are more powerful.*
- Discuss the prompt as a group, prompting the use of information in the chart to support positions. This activity is intended to prime them to write, but not to be an exhaustive exploration of each position.

**DAY 5**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Prompt</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Engage in writing to the prompt	Students write responses to the prompt	Who is more powerful, the wind or the McBrooms?	Something can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether or not we can control it. The McBrooms experience the wind as both a good and a bad thing in their lives, depending on who is more powerful.

**1. Present the writing prompt:**

- Remind students to state their position and use the text to support their answers.
- Explain that the objective is to write essays that could convince someone who has another position to change his/her mind.

**2. Students write to the prompt for the rest of the session:**

- Students will have access to the text and the visually organized information from previous days.

**The New Doctor unit: FGA-supported text-based discussion**

**Big idea:** It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn't sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.

**Writing prompt:** Do you think Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine? Why or why not?

\*

**DAY 1**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Interactively read the text	Prime background knowledge about the concepts and theme; Introduce and read the text	Open/closed-mindedness; Different medical practices	It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn't sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.

**1. Describe the story and explore the theme:** “In this story, Lupe is a little girl who lives in a small village in Latin America. She is trying to decide how she feels about a new doctor opening a new clinic in her village, which is different in many ways from the traditional medicine she has been learning from the village healer, Manuelita.”

***Open/Closed-mindedness:***

- Explain the idea of open/closed-mindedness: “Sometimes when we are hearing a different perspective about something – a different way of doing things or a different opinion about things – we want to learn more and consider whether we might want to think about the idea differently too. This is being open-minded. Sometimes, though, we do not want to hear anything more about the other perspective, and the idea of people not sharing our view of the idea makes us upset. This is being closed-minded. An important thing to remember is that sometimes we can start out one way – closed-minded, for example, and become open-minded after a while, depending on the circumstances and our ability to control our minds and feelings.”
- Provide an example of open/closed-mindedness: “Here’s an example. When I went back to school after teaching for a while, I would learn things about teaching in my classes that were different from what I had thought. Sometimes what I read or heard was critical of things I had thought were good to do, or promoted things I hadn’t thought to do. I felt closed-minded initially. I felt like, ‘I was a good teacher and I did this or that and never

did this or that, so these people must be wrong.’ I felt that way because I didn’t like thinking that I had been teaching in an ineffective way. But pretty quickly I realized that I was back in school to learn, and that these ideas were based on a lot of hard work studying teaching and learning. I became open-minded, considering what they had to say. Part of why I was able to change my state of mind was because I stopped thinking of the new information in terms of what kind of teacher I was, and started thinking of it in terms of what kind of teacher I could become.”

- Ask students if they have examples of being open/closed-minded or changing their states of mind.
- Connect the idea of open/closed-mindedness to the text/prompt: “In new places or new situations, we can feel nervous, which makes it harder to be open-minded because we feel like clinging to familiar ideas. Also, if we have been doing things the same way for a long time or put in a lot of effort to learn to do things a certain way, we might be closed-minded because we have always thought of this as the best way to do things. Sometimes it takes some time to become open-minded about new ideas, and sometimes we never do. Lupe wonders if the new doctor in her village will ever become more open-minded about traditional medicine.”

**2. Prime background knowledge:** “Before we read, let’s discuss two different ways of practicing medicine. We will consider how they are different and how they are the same. Then we’ll read about how the new doctor sees things.”

***Modern medicine vs. traditional medicine (or “healing”):***

- Ask students the following questions to activate their schemas about medicine:
  - “What is the job of doctors?”
  - “How do people stay healthy and get healthy when they are sick?”
  - “How do doctors know how to help patients?”
- Describe modern medicine: “Modern medicine is the kind that is most familiar to us in the United States and involves a lot of what you described above [which is what I anticipate]. It is practiced in clinics and hospitals, makes use of many different tools and instruments for viewing and listening to the inside of bodies, and uses medications to treat illness, often in the form of pills and syrups. Doctors go to medical school to get licenses to practice, and often choose one specific area to specialize in and learn the most about. Often doctors see many people from all over the area.”
- Describe traditional medicine: “Traditional medicine is often practiced in small villages and the practices are less familiar to people in the United States. It is often practiced right in patients’ homes or in the homes of the healers. The healers use ways of assessing health that don’t involve special equipment, like looking closely at a person’s tongue or eyes or skin to assess overall health. They often don’t use the medicines we are used to, but instead use ‘home remedies’ – ways of treating ailments with common household products, such as putting olive oil in a sore ear. Healers learn by apprenticing the healers

before them, following them in their work and learning how to do things. Healers often have to treat a wide variety of problems, and often they do not have special training in specific kinds of diseases or body systems, but rather specialize in the issues familiar to their village. They are usually very familiar with their patients and know about their lives and families.”

- Describe the hybridization of modern and traditional medicine: “Some people are more critical of modern medicine now, so many modern doctors draw from traditional practices to help treat patients. Also, because of technology that lets people communicate across the world, many healers might be familiar with knowledge and techniques from modern medicine. I have an example that illustrates this. I went to an allergist because I would often get sinus infections from my allergies. He gives me medicine to treat my allergies, but he also suggests I do nasal irrigation, which is a traditional medical practice in which you run water through your nostrils to help keep them clean and to soothe them. He uses both modern and traditional methods.”
- Throughout this discussion, see if students have ideas or experiences they want to share.

**3. Read the text:** “When we read, I want you to pay attention to what Dr. Johnson says and does and whether she seems open-minded or closed-minded with respect to traditional medicine.”

***Stopping points:***

p. 264 “Noche screeching, cawing, and chattering” – What kind of animal do you suppose Noche is?

p. 264 “perched” – a way of sitting on things, balanced on feet; usually said about birds

p. 264 “knapsack” – backpack

p. 266 “eagerly” – hopefully; with strong desire

p. 266 “puzzled” – confused

p. 266 “plentiful” – being there in large amounts

p. 266 “popularity” – being preferred/liked by many others

p. 267 “dependable” – you can count on her to do what needs to be done

p. 267 “voice was firm” – no room to argue; the decision is made

p. 267 “ushering” – leading, guiding

p. 268 “brush” – shrubs, bushes, scratchy plant life

p. 268 “naughty” – disobedient

p. 268 “temporary” – not permanent; won’t stay like that long

p. 269 “construction site” – location where they are building a building, filled with workers and large machines, usually

p. 269 “tumbled” – fell

p. 269 “sprawling” – spread out

p. 269 “gossamer-thin” – almost transparent, like the strings of a spider web



- p. 269 “What have we here?” – a saying meaning “Look at this,” or “What’s this?”
- p. 269 “threshold” – the bottom of the doorway
- p. 270 “examination room” – room in a doctor’s office where the doctor checks out and works on patients
- p. 271 “curious” – interested
- p. 271 “poking my nose into something” – investigating, but in a sneaky kind of way often
- p. 271 “reception” – like a party with some food and drinks, for people to meet and chat; often used for an event, like the opening of this clinic
- p. 271 “shyness” – being reserved, quiet way of being; fear of interacting with strangers.
- p. 272 “blood pressure” – a measure of cardiovascular health; how hard the blood pushes against the walls of the blood vessels; too high can mean your heart and vessels are not healthy, too low can lead to being light headed
- p. 272 “stethoscope” – medical device that helps doctors listen to heartbeats and air moving in and out of lungs
- p. 273 “witchcraft” – dangerous magic
- p. 273 “seemed more like witchcraft to her than anything Manuelita had ever done” and “wondered how she knew the medicines were good if she did not make them herself” and “pulled her hand away” – This is important because it shows that the traditional medicine people also are suspicious of modern medicine.
- p. 273 “companies” – businesses
- p. 273 “advantages” – chances to benefit, gain, or have good fortune
- p. 273 “home remedies” – treatments for illness, injury or ailment; “home” refers to them being done/made by people who aren’t medical professionals
- p. 274 “She did not want to be friends with the new doctor, because the new doctor could not be Manuelita’s friend. The new doctor would not want to have anything to do with a person who mixed her own medicines and did not know how to take pictures of people’s insides.” And “Worst of all, Lupe felt disloyal and guilty about the amount of time she, herself, had spent at the new clinic. She couldn’t seem to help herself though. She was fascinated by all the new medicines and strange instruments and, although she did not like to admit it, by the new doctor herself.” – This shows the relationship of distrust between the two medical perspectives, and Lupe feeling caught in the middle because of her curiosity about both. She is young and not set in one way yet.
- p. 274 “disloyal” – not staying devoted to something
- p. 274 “guilty” – ashamed
- p. 275 “Manuelita had been right. The new doctor’s medicine was often very different from hers.” – The author doesn’t give a lot of examples of this, so we have to just imagine how the treatments would be different.

- p. 277 “Dr. Johnson had a funny look on her face, as if she didn’t believe the dried leaves would work.” – This is another example, a smaller example, of Dr. Johnson not being used to the ways of this place and seeming suspicious of the effectiveness of those ways.
- p. 277 “Every time Lupe thought of that incident, her heart sank. What would Manuelita think if she ever found out that her friend, Lupe Montano, had been the new doctor’s first patient!” – This is another example of Lupe feeling caught in the middle of a feud.
- p. 278 “anxious” – excited, eager
- p. 278 “profusely” – extensively, in abundance
- p. 278 “mesas” – land form shaped like a table [draw/show a picture]
- p. 279 “pleading” – begging, asking with urgency
- p. 280 “facilities” – things designed to perform specific functions
- p. 280 “vanished” – disappeared
- p. 281 “emerged” – appeared, came out
- p. 281 “physically” – pertaining to the body and its functions
- p. 282 “curandera” – healer, practitioner of traditional medicine; Josefa is calling Lupe that because she is learning the trade from Manuelita.
- p. 282 “She could also speak English very well... but, as with most people in the village, when she was excited or had something very special to say, Spanish seemed the best language for saying it.” – This is analogous to the medical dilemma too. Josefa is excited and scared. She wants what is familiar and comes easily to her. And Dr. Johnson comes to the village knowing only a tiny bit about it, wanting to just thrust her way on the people (like when she was exasperated with Pedro and Josefa’s husband for speaking Spanish).
- p. 282 “With Manuelita she is certain” – meaning 100% sure; She wants the known familiar ways that have been proven to her during this important time.
- p. 282 “Sometimes associated with witchcraft, aren’t they?” – How funny! That is exactly what Lupe thought about X-rays! They both associate the unknown, or what they don’t understand, with dangerous magic.
- p. 282 “I have seen that your kind of medicine is good, but Manuelita’s is good too... Perhaps you could learn from each other.” – This is Lupe trying to bridge the gap. Dr. Johnson is resistant, at least initially.
- p. 283 “You, a curandera... What does she mean?” – This is often how people begin to find comfort with new thing. They find someone they trust that introduces them to the idea. But Dr. Johnson is still a little resistant, wanting to re-teach her.
- p. 283 “clutched” – grabbed and held tight
- p. 284 “I could use some help” – Another time when people might get more open is when they are worried and desperate for something to work.
- p. 284 “protest” – complain, fight against
- p. 285 “reassure” – calm, comfort

p. 285 “ceased” – stopped

p. 285 “Manuelita took the doctor’s hand in hers, but she did not speak.” – This still feels unresolved, and we don’t really know what went on in that room.

**4. Reveal writing prompt:** Do you think Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine? Why or why not?

## DAY 2

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Familiarize students with the FGA metalanguage; Reread the text and gather important information	Model and practice the application of the FGA metalanguage to the text; Subgroups reread segments of the text to identify what Dr. Johnson’s words and action show	Showing versus telling; Doing and saying processes	It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn’t sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.

**1. Explain the FGA metalanguage:** “Authors make a choice to *tell* us things or *show* us things with the words they use. Authors can say things very directly, but often they show us instead because it can be more interesting. They will choose different kinds of processes – the words that tell us about what the participants do, say, and think – depending on if they are telling us or showing us.” [Below is a guiding script.]

### ***Showing vs. telling:***

Showing things about a character makes the reader view them in a more realistic way. In real life, you don’t know what people around you are like because they *tell* you something like “I am a nice person.” You learn that someone is nice because of what they say and do that *shows* you. Similarly, you don’t always know someone is sad because they *tell* you, “I am sad.” More often, what they say and do *shows* it to you.

Let’s read a few sentences that *show* us things about a participant instead of *telling* us.” [Show examples, written on chart paper.]

*Mike’s mother told him he couldn’t go to the birthday party. Mike **stomped off** to his room.*

*Jenny hadn’t studied for the test, so she **slid her eyes over** to the paper in front of her friend.*

### ***Doing & saying processes:***

Writers use *processes* to tell us what a character is doing or saying, thinking or feeling, or even just who or how they are. To learn about characters, we can pay attention to their doing and saying processes in a story, and what they actually say. For example, if a character is sad because a friend hurt her feelings, what might they do? Perhaps cry or run away from that friend. What might they say? Perhaps “Go away,” or “I don’t want to talk to you.” And they might not just say it – they might cry or shout or whisper it. [All of this, of course, depends on the context of the rest of the story.]

These processes *show* us things, so we need to think about them. We need to think more about what the author is trying to say and infer the character’s thoughts and feelings by examining their words and actions. It requires us to do more work, but it makes the story interesting and helps us see the character through the eyes of other characters.

Lupe can’t read Dr. Johnson’s mind. She has to pay attention to her words and actions. So just like Lupe, today we are going to reread and look closely at Dr. Johnson’s doing and saying processes – her words and actions – to infer what she is thinking.

### **2. Assign groups and text segments:**

- Break students into subgroups (two pairs and a threesome). The pairs will have one struggling comprehender and either a typical or advanced comprehender, and the threesome will have one advanced, one typical, and one struggling comprehender.
- Assign each group certain segments of the text to analyze.
- Give each group charts with their assigned text segments.

### **3. Explain the task:**

- The charts will have four columns, one for the text segments, one for analysis of Dr. Johnson’s words, one for analysis of Dr. Johnson’s actions, and one (unlabeled until Day 3) for consideration of the prompt.
- Ask students to read the text segments listed on their charts and note the highlighted text that shows Dr. Johnson’s words and actions. Ask them to decide what her words and actions show about what she is thinking. They should record this in the appropriate column on their charts, beginning each sentence with “Dr. Johnson thinks...”

### **4. Model and practice applying the metalanguage to the text:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about curiosity. Fill in the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segment about bug repellent. Fill in the model chart.

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	
<p>Page 271:  <i>“I can understand,” Dr. Johnson said. “You have never had a clinic here before, and I suppose you wanted to see what it is like. I would have been the same way at your age. I was curious about just about everything – always poking my nose into something, and often getting into trouble.”</i></p> <p><i>Lupe looked up at the doctor, surprised. She was trying to imagine her as a little girl, poking her nose into things. The doctor <u>was laughing</u> at her memories, and the short curls on her head bounced as she laughed.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks she understands why Lupe was there.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks curiosity is a positive quality.</p>	

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	
<p>Page 273:  <i>She looked up at the shelves full of bottles. “You have many remedies,” she said. “It must have taken you a long time to</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks it is not a doctor’s responsibility to make the medicine.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks the idea of making her own medicine is a funny or silly idea.</p>	

<p><i>mix them all.”</i></p> <p><i>“Oh, I didn’t make them myself.” The doctor <u>laughed</u>.</i></p> <p><i>“Then where did you get them?” Lupe asked.</i></p> <p><i>“Why, I bought them, from companies that sell medicines. There are many companies that know how to make medicines much better than I could.”</i></p>			
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**5. Subgroups apply the metalanguage independently:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign thoughts to the words and actions.

**Text segment for threesome:**

Text	What do Dr. Johnson's words tell us about what she is thinking?	What do Dr. Johnson's actions tell us about what she is thinking?	
<p>Page 273:  <i>"I'll have a lot of advantages to share with you," Dr. Johnson said. "You won't have to travel all the way to Albuquerque when you are sick, or rely on home remedies you make yourself, that don't work most of the time. I'm looking forward to bringing that to all of you, and I'm looking forward to being your friend."</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks she is improving the medical care for the people of this village because their ways are insufficient.</p>	<p>NA</p>	
<p>Page 284:  <i>"Maybe Manuelita could at least help you," Lupe insisted.</i></p> <p><i>"I could use some help," Dr. Johnson said, "but a curandera... no." She looked again at the sobbing Josefa.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson's not going to give in, Lupe thought. She watched as the doctor fussed around Josefa, holding her hand and talking to her softly.</i></p> <p><i>"It's not going to be a good birth if she is so upset," Dr.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks Josefa is upset enough that it will interfere with the birth.</p> <p>Dr. Johnson thinks inviting Manuelita to just be there might help calm Josefa.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks Josefa is upset enough that it will interfere with the birth and she can't think of anything to help her.</p>	

<p><i>Johnson said to no one in particular. She turned to Lupe. "Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer."</i></p>			
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**Text segment for pair 1:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson's words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson's actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	
<p>Page 281: <i>Just then Josefa called from the bedroom. "Is that Lupe's voice I hear? Let me talk to her."</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson turned to Lupe. "I don't know," she said. "You really shouldn't..."</i></p> <p><i>"Lupe! Let me talk to Lupe!" Josefa called.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson's brow wrinkled into a <u>frown</u>. She <u>bit her lower lip</u>. "Oh... very well," she said. "Come with me." She <u>led Lupe into the bedroom</u>.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks it is inappropriate for Lupe to go in and see Josefa during the birth, but wants to please Josefa so she changes her mind.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks it is inappropriate for Lupe to go in and see Josefa during the birth, but wants to please Josefa so she changes her mind.</p>	



<p>Page 282:  <i>“Who is Manuelita?”</i></p> <p><i>“A curandera.”</i></p> <p><i>“A what?”</i></p> <p><i>“A curandera.”</i></p> <p><i>“Oh, yes,” Dr. Johnson said. “I seem to remember... a healer. Yes, I’ve heard of them. Sometimes associated with witchcraft, aren’t they? No, I won’t have that.”</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks traditional healing methods are witchcraft, and that they are inappropriate to be part of a birth.</p>	<p>NA</p>	
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**Text segment for pair 2:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	
<p>Page 282-3:  <i>Josefa was crying softly. “Lupe is a little curandera,” she said in English. “She knows the good way.”</i></p> <p><i>“You, a curandera?” Dr. Johnson asked. “What does she mean?”</i></p> <p><i>“Manuelita has taught me many things,” Lupe said.</i></p> <p><i>“Well, I guess that explains your interest in medicine. Lupe, I welcome you to come talk to me as often as</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks Lupe’s training in traditional medicine must have given her incorrect ideas.</p>	<p>NA</p>	

<p><i>we can find the time. Maybe I can undo some of the wrong ideas you may have.”</i></p>			
<p>Page 285:  <i>Lupe saw Cousin Josefa holding her baby and smiling, and Manuelita standing beside them. Dr. Johnson <u>walked toward Manuelita and held out her hand.</u></i></p> <p><i>“Thank you,” the doctor said. “I... I guess I have a lot to learn.”</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks whatever Manuelita did during the birth was helpful and that she should learn from her.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson think Manuelita is someone she should respect and work with.</p>	

### DAY 3

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Reread analysis to consider in light of the writing prompt	Subgroups reread segments of the text to identify what Dr. Johnson's thoughts mean about her acceptance of traditional medicine	Open/closed-mindedness; Showing versus telling	It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn't sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.

#### **1. Explain the task:**

- The charts will have the fourth column labeled - *Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?*
- Ask students to read the analysis listed on their charts and decide what it means for Dr. Johnson's acceptance of traditional medicine. They should record this on their charts, beginning each sentence with "No/Yes, because..." We will write "no" reasons in red and "yes" feelings in green.

#### **2. Model and practice the task:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about curiosity. Fill in the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segment about bug repellent. Fill in the model chart.

"Now that we have figured out what Dr. Johnson is thinking in these segments, we need to think about what that means for her acceptance of traditional medicine. That is what Lupe is thinking about as she observes her word and actions."

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?</b>
<p>Page 271:  <i>“I can understand,” Dr. Johnson said. “You have never had a clinic here before, and I suppose you wanted to see what it is like. I would have been the same way at your age. I was curious about just about everything – always poking my nose into something, and often getting into trouble.”</i></p> <p><i>Lupe looked up at the doctor, surprised. She was trying to imagine her as a little girl, poking her nose into things. The doctor <u>was laughing</u> at her memories, and the short curls on her head bounced as she laughed.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks she understands why Lupe was there.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks curiosity is a positive quality.</p>	<p>Yes, because her curiosity makes her want to learn about new things.</p>

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?</b>
<p>Page 273:  <i>She looked up at the shelves full of bottles. “You have many remedies,” she said. “It must have taken</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks it is not a doctor’s responsibility to make the medicine.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks the idea of making her own medicine is a funny or silly idea.</p>	<p>No, because she thinks the ways of traditional medicine are silly or not her job.</p>

<p><i>you a long time to mix them all.”</i></p> <p><i>“Oh, I didn’t make them myself.” The doctor <u>laughed</u>.</i></p> <p><i>“Then where did you get them?” Lupe asked.</i></p> <p><i>“Why, I bought them, from companies that sell medicines. There are many companies that know how to make medicines much better than I could.”</i></p>			
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**4. Circulate to scaffold and reinforce:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign feelings to certain segments and extend their reasoning.

**Text segment for threesome:**

Text	What do Dr. Johnson's words tell us about what she is thinking?	What do Dr. Johnson's actions tell us about what she is thinking?	Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?
<p>Page 273:  <i>"I'll have a lot of advantages to share with you," Dr. Johnson said. "You won't have to travel all the way to Albuquerque when you are sick, or rely on home remedies you make yourself, that don't work most of the time. I'm looking forward to bringing that to all of you, and I'm looking forward to being your friend."</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks she is improving the medical care for the people of this village because their ways are insufficient.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>No, because she thinks her ways are better than their traditional ways.</p>
<p>Page 284:  <i>"Maybe Manuelita could at least help you," Lupe insisted.</i></p> <p><i>"I could use some help," Dr. Johnson said, "but a curandera... no." She looked again at the sobbing Josefa.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson's not going to give in, Lupe thought. She watched as the doctor fussed around Josefa, holding her hand and talking to her softly.</i></p> <p><i>"It's not going to be a good birth if she is so upset," Dr.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks Josefa is upset enough that it will interfere with the birth.</p> <p>Dr. Johnson thinks inviting Manuelita to just be there might help calm Josefa.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks Josefa is upset enough that it will interfere with the birth and she can't think of anything to help her.</p>	<p>Yes, because she finally allows them to invite Manuelita.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>No, because she still doesn't want to let Manuelita do anything but just be there.</p>

<p><i>Johnson said to no one in particular. She turned to Lupe. "Maybe it wouldn't hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer."</i></p>			
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**Text segment for pair 1:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson's words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson's actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?</b>
<p>Page 281: <i>Just then Josefa called from the bedroom. "Is that Lupe's voice I hear? Let me talk to her."</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson turned to Lupe. "I don't know," she said. "You really shouldn't..."</i></p> <p><i>"Lupe! Let me talk to Lupe!" Josefa called.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson's brow wrinkled into a frown. She bit her lower lip. "Oh... very well," she said. "Come with me." She led Lupe into the bedroom.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks it is inappropriate for Lupe to go in and see Josefa during the birth, but wants to please Josefa so she changes her mind.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks it is inappropriate for Lupe to go in and see Josefa during the birth, but wants to please Josefa so she changes her mind.</p>	<p>Yes, because she is able to change her mind about something that seemed strange to her way of doing things.</p>

<p>Page 282:  <i>“Who is Manuelita?”</i></p> <p><i>“A curandera.”</i></p> <p><i>“A what?”</i></p> <p><i>“A curandera.”</i></p> <p><i>“Oh, yes,” Dr. Johnson said. “I seem to remember... a healer. Yes, I’ve heard of them. Sometimes associated with witchcraft, aren’t they? No, I won’t have that.”</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks traditional healing methods are witchcraft, and that they are inappropriate to be part of a birth.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>No, because she thinks traditional methods are not real medicine and aren’t useful.</p>
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**Text segment for pair 2:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s words tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>What do Dr. Johnson’s actions tell us about what she is thinking?</b>	<b>Will Dr. Johnson grow to accept traditional medicine?</b>
<p>Page 282-3:  <i>Josefa was crying softly. “Lupe is a little curandera,” she said in English. “She knows the good way.”</i></p> <p><i>“You, a curandera?” Dr. Johnson asked. “What does she mean?”</i></p> <p><i>“Manuelita has taught me many things,” Lupe said.</i></p> <p><i>“Well, I guess that explains your interest in medicine. Lupe, I welcome you to come talk to me as often as</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks Lupe’s training in traditional medicine must have given her incorrect ideas.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>No, because she thinks traditional medical practices are based on incorrect ideas.</p>



<p><i>we can find the time. Maybe I can undo some of the wrong ideas you may have.”</i></p>			
<p>Page 285:  <i>Lupe saw Cousin Josefa holding her baby and smiling, and Manuelita standing beside them. Dr. Johnson <u>walked toward Manuelita and held out her hand.</u></i></p> <p><i>“Thank you,” the doctor said. “I... I guess I have a lot to learn.”</i></p>	<p>Dr. Johnson thinks whatever Manuelita did during the birth was helpful and that she should learn from her.</p>	<p>Dr. Johnson think Manuelita is someone she should respect and work with.</p>	<p>Yes, because she saw some value to traditional medical practices and says she wants to learn from Manuelita.</p>

**DAY 4**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Visual organizer</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Organize important information	Subgroups present their findings; Teacher uses a visual organizer to display group work; Group discusses the writing prompt	Categorical chart	It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn't sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.

**1. Document student work as they report out on their analyses:**

- Use a “categorical” chart with headings referring to the writing prompt positions: Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine; Dr. Johnson will not grow to accept traditional medicine.
- For each position ask the groups to submit segments that go there and post them sequentially. As they are offered, go over the analysis the groups did for each segment.
- This will result in a list of evidence for each position, giving students a resource for evidence for the writing prompt and also representing the big idea in the text that it can be hard for people to accept different ways of doing things. Highlight the segment that supports both ideas last, pointing out her inner struggle despite her actions. The chart will simply have two columns for posting the groups’ analyses. It will look something like this (but less dense due to it being on a much larger scale):

<b>Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine</b>	<b>Dr. Johnson will not grow to accept traditional medicine.</b>
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<p>Page 271:  <i>"I can understand," Dr. Johnson said. "You have never had a clinic here before, and I suppose you wanted to see what it is like. I would have been the same way at your age. I was curious about just about everything – always poking my nose into something, and often getting into trouble."</i></p> <p><i>Lupe looked up at the doctor, surprised. She was trying to imagine her as a little girl, poking her nose into things. The doctor was <u>laughing</u> at her memories, and the short curls on her head bounced as she laughed.</i></p>	<p>Yes, because her curiosity makes her want to learn about new things.</p>	<p>Page 273:  <i>She looked up at the shelves full of bottles. "You have many remedies," she said. "It must have taken you a long time to mix them all."</i></p> <p><i>"Oh, I didn't make them myself." The doctor <u>laughed</u>.</i></p> <p><i>"Then where did you get them?" Lupe asked.</i></p> <p><i>"Why, I bought them, from companies that sell medicines. There are many companies that know how to make medicines much better than I could."</i></p>	<p>No, because she thinks the ways of traditional medicine are silly or not her job.</p>
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<p>Page 281: <i>Just then Josefa called from the bedroom. “Is that Lupe’s voice I hear? Let me talk to her.”</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson turned to Lupe. “I don’t know,” she said. “You really shouldn’t...”</i></p> <p><i>“Lupe! Let me talk to Lupe!” Josefa called.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson’s brow wrinkled into a frown. She bit her lower lip. “Oh... very well,” she said. “Come with me.” She <u>led Lupe into the bedroom.</u></i></p>	<p>Yes, because she is able to change her mind about something that seemed strange to her way of doing things.</p>	<p>Page 273: <i>“I’ll have a lot of advantages to share with you,” Dr. Johnson said. “You won’t have to travel all the way to Albuquerque when you are sick, or rely on home remedies you make yourself, that don’t work most of the time. I’m looking forward to bringing that to all of you, and I’m looking forward to being your friend.”</i></p>	<p>No, because she thinks her ways are better than their traditional ways.</p>
<p>Page 285: <i>Lupe saw Cousin Josefa holding her baby and smiling, and Manuelita standing beside them. Dr. Johnson <u>walked toward Manuelita and held out her hand.</u></i></p> <p><i>“Thank you,” the doctor said.</i></p> <p><i>“I... I guess I have a lot to learn.”</i></p>	<p>Yes, because she saw some value to traditional medical practices and says she wants to learn from Manuelita.</p>	<p>Page 282: <i>“Who is Manuelita?”</i></p> <p><i>“A curandera.”</i></p> <p><i>“A what?”</i></p> <p><i>“A curandera.”</i></p> <p><i>“Oh, yes,” Dr. Johnson said. “I seem to remember... a healer. Yes, I’ve heard of them. Sometimes associated with witchcraft, aren’t they? No, I won’t have that.”</i></p>	<p>No, because she thinks traditional methods are not real medicine and aren’t useful.</p>

		<p>Page 282-3:  <i>Josefa was crying softly. "Lupe is a little curandera," she said in English. "She knows the good way."</i></p> <p><i>"You, a curandera?" Dr. Johnson asked. "What does she mean?"</i></p> <p><i>"Manuelita has taught me many things," Lupe said.</i></p> <p><i>"Well, I guess that explains your interest in medicine. Lupe, I welcome you to come talk to me as often as we can find the time. Maybe I can undo some of the wrong ideas you may have."</i></p>	<p>No, because she thinks traditional medical practices are based on incorrect ideas.</p>
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<p>Page 284:  <i>“Maybe Manuelita could at least help you,” Lupe insisted.</i></p> <p><i>“I could use some help,” Dr. Johnson said, “but a curandera... no.” She <u>looked again at the sobbing Josefa.</u></i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson’s not going to give in, Lupe thought. She watched as the doctor fussed around Josefa, holding her hand and talking to her softly.</i></p> <p><i>“It’s not going to be a good birth if she is so upset,” Dr. Johnson said to no one in particular. She turned to Lupe. “Maybe it wouldn’t hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer.”</i></p>	<p>Yes, because she finally allows them to invite Manuelita.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>No, because she still doesn’t want to let Manuelita do anything but just be there.</p>	<p>Page 284:  <i>“Maybe Manuelita could at least help you,” Lupe insisted.</i></p> <p><i>“I could use some help,” Dr. Johnson said, “but a curandera... no.” She <u>looked again at the sobbing Josefa.</u></i></p> <p><i>Dr. Johnson’s not going to give in, Lupe thought. She watched as the doctor fussed around Josefa, holding her hand and talking to her softly.</i></p> <p><i>“It’s not going to be a good birth if she is so upset,” Dr. Johnson said to no one in particular. She turned to Lupe. “Maybe it wouldn’t hurt anything for this, this Manuelita just to be here... All right, Lupe go get the healer.”</i></p>	<p>Yes, because she finally allows them to invite Manuelita.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>No, because she still doesn’t want to let Manuelita do anything but just be there.</p>
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**2. Revisit the prompt:**

- Post two pieces of chart paper with the following headings:
  - *Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine.*
  - *Dr. Johnson will not grow to accept traditional medicine*
- Discuss the prompt as a group, prompting the use of information in the chart to support positions. This activity is intended to prime them to write, but not to be an exhaustive exploration of each position.

## DAY 5

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Prompt</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Engage in writing to the prompt	Students write responses to the prompt	Do you think Dr. Johnson will grow to accept traditional medicine? Why or why not?	It can be hard for people to accept that there are different ways of doing things. Lupe isn't sure if the new doctor in her village will ever accept the traditional medicine practiced there.

### **1. Present the writing prompt:**

- Remind students to state their position and use the text to support their answers.
- Explain that the objective is to write essays that could convince someone who has another position to change his/her mind.

### **2. Students write to the prompt for the rest of the session:**

- Students will have access to the text and the visually organized information from previous days.
- Students will write totally independently, without teacher or peer input.

**Marven of the Great North Woods unit: FGA-supported text-based discussion**

**Big idea:** New situations can be both fascinating and intimidating. Marven experiences a lot of new things in this new place.

**Writing prompt:** Will Marven be happy in the Great North Woods or want to go back home?

\*

**DAY 1**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Interactively read the text	Prime background knowledge about the concepts and theme; Introduce and read the text	Fascination; Intimidation; Lumberjacks;	New situations can be both fascinating and intimidating. Marven experiences a lot of new things in this new place.

**1. Describe the story and explore the theme:** “In this story *Marven of the Great North Woods*, a ten-year-old leaves his home to take a job for a logging company. He is in a new place, with a new job, and is surrounded by these huge men called lumberjacks, who chop down the trees. Marven is both fascinated and intimidated by this new life.”

***Fascination:***

- Explain the idea of fascination: “Fascination is being completely amazed by something and so intensely interested that you try to explore it more and more. For instance, if a sight fascinates you, you might stare and stare at it. If a song fascinates you, you might listen to it over and over. If a story or movie fascinates you, you might watch it again and again. We are often fascinated with things we have never seen before because they kind of ‘blow our minds.’ When we are fascinated, we think a lot about whatever it is and it absorbs all our thoughts sometimes.”
- Provide an example of fascination: “When I was a kid, my brother was fascinated with sharks. He was always reading about them, watching television programs about them, and staring at pictures of them. He talked about sharks all the time. Part of why they were fascinating was because we didn’t live around sharks... They were a new strange thing to him. He was not fascinated, for example, with the fish in our fish tank because he saw those all the time.”
- Ask students if they have ever been fascinated by something.
- Connect the idea of fascination to the text/prompt: “We often get fascinated with things that are new to us because we want to learn more about this strange topic. Marven has never seen people as huge or burly as the men he works with – called lumberjacks - and he is fascinated by them.”



### ***Intimidation:***

- Explain the idea of intimidation: “Intimidation is being overwhelmed by something, and fearful of it. For instance, a task can intimidate you. Maybe your teacher assigns something that is such a huge project, you feel scared of it and don’t even know how to start. Or maybe you want to join a sports team or a school play or something, but you are nervous to even try out because everyone who does it is very good at it and you don’t feel as good. People can intimidate us too. If you have a teacher or relative who is kind of scary to you, that feeling might be intimidation.”
- Provide an example of intimidation: “When I started high school I went to the ‘basketball camp’ that was preparing us to try out for the high school team. I had played basketball as a middle schooler and enjoyed it a lot, but at this camp the other girls were so good and the coach was a lot tougher and kind of meaner than any other coaches I had had. I was so intimidated, I decided not to try out for the team.”
- Ask students if they have ever been intimidated by something.
- Connect the idea of intimidation to the text/prompt: “When we are intimidated by something, it is hard to learn more about it because we want to avoid it. But learning more might help us not feel scared anymore. Marven experiences this with the lumberjacks who intimidate him with their size.”

**2. Prime background knowledge:** “Before we read, let’s discuss the logging industry of the past, so you can get an idea of where this story is set and what the characters are like. Then we’ll read about Marven’s experience.”

### ***Lumberjacks:***

- Explain key points about logging and lumberjacks to orient students to the story:
  - “Logging is an industry that cuts down trees and processes them to be sent to different companies that make things with trees, such as paper.”
  - “Cutting the trees down in the past required a lot of effort on the part of lumberjacks, who didn’t have the machinery of today so they had to be big strong men.”
  - “Lumberjacks are known for being huge, tough men who did dangerous jobs in which the trees could fall on them or they could be injured with the sharp tools – saws and axes – used to chop down the trees.”
- Show students some pictures of lumberjacks:
  - Classic: [http://3.bp.blogspot.com/\\_r9L1qakeoCc/UGHDxa\\_aoVI/AAAAAAAAAPr8/fhgRWucbqzg/s1600/1lumberjack.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_r9L1qakeoCc/UGHDxa_aoVI/AAAAAAAAAPr8/fhgRWucbqzg/s1600/1lumberjack.jpg)
  - Real: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Logging\\_oregon.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Logging_oregon.jpg)

**3. Read the text:** “When we read, I want you to pay attention to what is fascinating and what is intimidating to Marven.”

### ***Stopping points:***

- p. 218 “silhouettes” – outlines in the darkness; just shapes
- p. 218 “fiddle” – a stringed musical instrument
- p. 218 “immense” – huuuuuuuge

- p. 218 “frantic” – emotionally out of control; wild
- p. 219 “woodstove” – a little enclosed fireplace used for keeping warm
- p. 219 “cubbyholes” – little nooks for keeping things
- p. 219 “ledger” – recordkeeping book, usually used to track money
- p. 220 “payroll” – the process of paying employees and keeping track of their work and wages
- p. 220 “bunkhouse” – the building with all the beds
- p. 220 “bearskin” – the skin of a bear, used as a blanket in this context
- p. 220 “knickers” – pants
- p. 220 “cut-down” – feathers used to stuff jackets and make them very warm
- p. 222 “stirred” – moved
- p. 222 “granite” – a very hard stone
- p. 222 “muttered” – spoke unclearly, kind of to oneself
- p. 222 “glittered” – twinkled, shone
- p. 222 “squinted” – scrunched up one’s eyes
- p. 222 “tremble” – shake with fear
- p. 224 “grunted” – made a low effortful noise
- p. 224 “skillets” – frying pans
- p. 224 “kosher” – like halal, following rules about what Jews can and cannot eat
- p. 224 “thawing” – melting
- p. 224 “cords” – units of wood
- p. 226 “chit” – a receipt; a slip of paper displaying information about payment
- p. 227 “whisking” – swooshing, whispery
- p. 228 “glistened” – shone, twinkled
- p. 228 “ghostly” – eerie; translucent
- p. 228 “desperately” – panicked; willing to do anything
- p. 228 “train platform” – spot where people wait for and get on the train
- p. 229 “startled” – became quickly alarmed or scared
- p. 231 “drifted” – moved gently on the air

**4. Reveal writing prompt:** Will Marven be happy in the Great North Woods or want to go back home?

## DAY 2

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Reread the text and gather important information	Subgroups reread segments of the text to identify how Marven is feeling	Fascination; Intimidation;	New situations can be both fascinating and intimidating. Marven experiences a lot of new things in this new place.

### **1. Assign groups and text segments:**

- Break students into subgroups (two pairs and a threesome). The pairs will have one struggling comprehender and either a typical or advanced comprehender, and the threesome will have one advanced, one typical, and one struggling comprehender.
- Assign each group certain segments of the text to analyze.
- Give each group charts with their assigned text segments.

### **2. Explain the task:**

- The charts will have two columns, one for the text segments and one for the associated feelings.
- Ask students to read the text segments listed on their charts and decide what Marven is feeling. They should record this on their charts, beginning each sentence with “Marven feels...”
- Note that there might be more than one feeling for a text segment; Prepare them for the task by going over / adding to a list of “feeling words” associated with fascination/intimidation, and a list of word pairs that express opposing emotions (see below).

### **3. Model and practice the task:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about Marven arriving at camp and seeing the dancing. Fill in the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segments about Marven seeing his new office and waking up in the cold. Fill in the model chart.

“Marven is both fascinated and intimidated by this new place. We’re going to reread and pay attention to how he feels as he gets used to his new home.”

**Word list for feelings that are more specific than “good” “bad” “happy” “sad” etc., organized by opposing concepts:**

awed amazed delighted attracted excited mesmerized transported	bored uninterested distracted
worried anxious nervous overwhelmed confused upset	calm relieved confident
afraid terrified scared startled	safe secure comforted
Lonely	included

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is Marven thinking/feeling?</b>
<p>Page 218: <i>When they entered the building, the long shadows from the yard suddenly sprung to life. Marven stared. Immense men with long beards and wild hair were jumping around to the fiddler's tunes like a pack of frantic grizzly bears. They were the biggest and wildest men Marven had ever seen.</i></p> <p><i>Marven could have watched the dancing all night, but Mr. Murray said, "Come on, Marven. We start early in the morning. I'll show you where you'll be living."</i></p>	<p>Marven feels amazed by the size of these lumberjacks.</p> <p>Marven feels mesmerized by their dancing.</p>
<p>Page 224: <i>Marven stared at the food in dismay. It's not kosher, he thought. In Marven's house it was against ancient Jewish law to eat dairy products and meat together. And never, ever, did a Jew eat bacon. Marven came to a quick decision. One day he would eat the flapjacks and oatmeal with milk. The next day he would eat the steak and the oatmeal without milk. And never the bacon.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels worried because the food is against his religion.</p> <p>Marven feels relieved to have a solution for the problem.</p>

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is Marven thinking/feeling?</b>
Page 220: <i>Mr. Murray took Marven to the small office where he would work and sleep. In Duluth, Marven had to share a bedroom with his two younger sisters and all of their dolls and toys, but this room was his – all his - and he liked it.</i>	Marven feels excited to have a place of his own.
Page 221: <i>It seemed to Marven he had just crawled under the bearskin when he heard the first bell. The fire was out and the room was dark and cold. He lit the kerosene lamp and pulled on his double-thick long underwear, two pairs of socks, two pairs of knickers, and two sweaters. Then he put on his cut-down overcoat.</i>	Marven feels upset about having to get out of bed and go outside in the very dark and cold night.

**4. Circulate to scaffold and reinforce:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign feelings to certain segments and extend their reasoning.

**Text segment for threesome:**

<b>Text</b>	<b>What is Marven thinking/feeling?</b>
Page 221: <i>After the second bell, Marven heard the jacks heading toward the eating hall. It was nearly time for his first job.</i>  <i>He ran through the cold morning darkness to the bunkhouse, peeked in, and counted five huge lumps in the shadows. Marven waited just inside the door.</i>	Marven feels anxious about waking the sleeping jacks.  Marven feels scared to enter the room.

<p>Page 222: <i>One lump stirred, then another. They grunted, rolled, and climbed out from under the covers. Their huge shadows slid across the ceiling.</i></p> <p><i>One jack was still in the sack. Marven took a deep breath, walked bravely over to the bed, reached out, and tapped the jack's shoulder. It was like poking a granite boulder. The jack's beard ran right into his long shaggy hair; Marven couldn't even find an ear to shout into.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels awed by the size of the jack.</p> <p>Marven feels nervous about waking this sleeping jack.</p>
<p>Page 222: <i>"Will you get up?" Marven asked anxiously.</i></p> <p><i>Jean Louis growled and fixed him in the hard blue squint of one eye.</i></p> <p><i>"Please." Marven stood straight and tried not to tremble.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels worried about how he's going to make this jack get up.</p> <p>Marven feels scared of the size and toughness of this jack.</p>

**Text segment for pair 1:**

<p>Page 227: <i>It was all very confusing. Sometimes two names were on one chit. These were called doublees; there were even some triplees. This meant more calculations. And sometimes chits were in the wrong pay-period box.</i></p> <p><i>Marven sat staring at the scraps. "There is no system!" he muttered. Where to begin?</i></p>	<p>Marven feels confused by the chit system.</p> <p>Marven feels overwhelmed by the disorganized work he has to make sense of.</p>
<p>Page 227: <i>By Friday of the second week, Marven had learned his job so well that he finished early. He had not been on his skis since he had arrived at camp. Every day the routine was simply meals and work, and Marven kept to his office and away from the lumberjacks as much as he could. But today he wanted to explore, so he put on his skis and followed the sled paths into the woods.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels more confident about his work.</p> <p>Marven feels a little bored by how his days are spent.</p> <p>Marven still feels afraid of the lumberjacks.</p>

<p>Page 227:  <i>He glided forward, his skis making soft whisking sounds in the snow. This certainly was different from city skiing in Duluth, where he would dodge the ragman's cart or the milkman's wagon, where the sky was notched with chimney pots belching smoke, where the snow turned sooty as soon as it fell.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels delighted by how nice the skiing is here compared to his home town.</p>
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**Text segment for pair 2:**

<p>Page 228:  <i>Here in the great north woods all was still and white. Beads of ice glistened like jewels. The frosted needles of pine and spruce pricked the eggshell sky, and a ghostly moon began to climb over the treetops. Marven came upon a frozen lake covered with snow, which lay in a circle of tall trees like a bowl of sugar. He skimmed out across it on his skis, his cheeks stinging in the cold air, and stopped in the middle to listen to the quietness.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels transported by this beautiful place.</p>
<p>Page 228-9:  <i>Marven began to tremble, but he knew he must remain still, very still. Maybe, Marven thought desperately, the grizzly would think he was a small tree growing in the middle of the lake. He tried very hard to look like a tree. But concentrating on being a tree was difficult because Marven kept thinking about the bundle on the train platform – his mother, his father, his two big sisters, his two little sisters. He belonged in Duluth with them, not in the middle of the great north woods with a grizzly.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels terrified by the possibility of a grizzly bear.</p> <p>Marven feels lonely for his family.</p>

<p>Page 231:  <i>As they made their way back to the sled paths, Marven heard a French song drifting through the woods. The other jacks came down the path, their saws and axes slung across their shoulders, and Marven and Jean Louis joined them. Evening shadows fell through the trees, and as Marven skied alongside the huge men, he hummed the tune they were singing.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels comforted by the other jacks coming.</p> <p>Marven feels included in the group. He feels less intimidated.</p>
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### DAY 3

Goal	Activity	Important ideas	Big idea
<p>Familiarize students with the FGA metalanguage</p>	<p>Model and practice the application of the FGA metalanguage to the text</p>	<p>Turned up/down language</p>	<p>New situations can be both fascinating and intimidating. Marven experiences a lot of new things in this new place.</p>

**1. Explain the FGA metalanguage:** “Writers choose words to convey the intensity of the feeling or action. This is called the *force* and writers can control the force by “turning it up” or “turning it down,” like the volume on a television or radio. They can make something sound more or less intense. There are several ways they do this.” [Below is a guiding script.]

***Adding describing words:***

“Turning it up or down” can also be done by **adding describing words**. Some words can be added to describe a thing or an action, which can change the force of the big idea. [Discuss examples, written on chart paper.]

***Big idea: Fear of a dog***

*The dog stared at him. VS. The big, mean dog stared at him. VS. The little, annoying dog stared at him.*

***Big idea: Worrying about health/test result***

*He waited for the nurse to call his name. VS. He waited nervously for the nurse to call his name. VS. He waited peacefully for the nurse to call his name.*

***Using specific, precise vocabulary:***



“Turning it up or down” can also be done by **choosing specific vocabulary**. Some words describe things or actions more precisely, which can change the force of the big idea. [Discuss examples, written on chart paper.]

Big idea: Fear of a dog

*The big, mean dog stared at him. VS. The huge, ferocious dog glared at him. VS. The pesky dog glanced at him.*

Big idea: Running fast

*He bolted through the woods. VS. He jogged through the woods.*

Big idea: Feeling misunderstood by a teacher

*His teacher didn't give him a chance to explain. VS. His teacher refused to give him a chance to explain.*

**Inserting details and description:**

“Turning it up or down” can also be done by **inserting descriptive details**. Adding a lot of detailed description can give the reader a vivid picture of what is happening, which can change the force of the big idea. [Discuss examples, written on chart paper.]

Big idea: Worrying about health/test result

*He waited for the nurse to call his name. VS. He waited for the nurse to call his name, imagining the way the doctor might tell him the terrible news.*

Big idea: Fear of a dog

*The dog stared at him. VS. The dog stared at him and he saw the light glinting off of his teeth.*

*The school was big. VS. The school was the biggest building I had ever seen. VS. The school was big, compared to my old, small school.*

Big idea: Feeling misunderstood by a teacher

*His teacher didn't give him a chance to explain. VS. His teacher didn't give him a chance to explain. It was like she had already made up her mind about him. VS. His teacher didn't give him a chance to explain, but said she would later.*

Big idea: Running away from something

*He ran through the woods. VS. He ran through the woods, where he had to dodge the trees and watch out for holes in the ground. VS. He ran through the woods, where he knew he could easily get away.*

**Using certain “turn it up/down” words:**

One way to control the force of the language is by **using certain words**. “Turning it up” can be done with words like *very, so, all, even, every, extremely*. “Turning it down” can be done with

words like *a little, kind of, some, only, simply, barely*. Even little words like these can change the force of the big idea. [Discuss examples, written on chart paper.]

*Big idea: Fear of a dog*

*The dog was big. VS. The dog was very big. VS. The dog was kind of big.*

*Big idea: Feeling misunderstood by a teacher*

*My teacher didn't give me a chance to explain. VS. My teacher didn't even give me a chance to explain.*

*Big idea: Feeling good about friends*

*My friends are nice. VS. All my friends are nice. VS. Some of my friends are nice.*

*Big idea: Worrying about health/test result*

*He was a little worried as he waited for the nurse to call his name. VS. He was extremely worried as he waited for the nurse to call his name.*

This story doesn't tell us exactly what Marven is feeling at every moment, and you all inferred his feelings yesterday for the segments you analyzed. Today you're going to go back and identify the language that controls the force of the ideas and helps us identify those feelings when we read. We're going to highlight the language that turns the force up or down.

**2. Model and practice applying the metalanguage to the text:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segment about Marven arriving at camp and seeing the dancing. Fill in the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segment about Marven seeing his new office and waking up in the cold. Fill in the model chart.
- The added first column is just for reference in this lesson plan. It offers simpler language to juxtapose against what the author wrote, to illustrate the idea of "turning it up/down."; The grayed out cells will be "bonus" if groups finish early, since they are trickier for identifying "turned up/down" language; The gray and red highlights are added on Day 4.

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Juxtaposing text</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>What is Marven thinking/feeling?</b>
<p><i>When they entered the building, the long shadows from the yard suddenly sprung to life. Marven stared. Men with long beards and wild hair were jumping around to the fiddler’s tunes. They were big and wild. Marven could have kept watching the dancing, but Mr. Murray said, “Come on, Marven. We start early in the morning. I’ll show you where you’ll be living.”</i></p>	<p>Page 218:  <i>When they entered the building, the long shadows from the yard suddenly sprung to life. Marven stared. Immense men with long beards and wild hair were jumping around to the fiddler’s tunes like a pack of frantic grizzly bears. They were the biggest and wildest men Marven had ever seen.</i></p> <p><i>Marven could have watched the dancing all night, but Mr. Murray said, “Come on, Marven. We start early in the morning. I’ll show you where you’ll be living.”</i></p>	<p>Marven feels amazed by the size of these lumberjacks.</p> <p>Marven feels mesmerized by their dancing.</p>
<p><i>Marven stared at the food. It’s not kosher, he thought. In Marven’s house it was against ancient Jewish law to eat dairy products and meat together. And Jews don’t eat bacon. Marven decided that one day he would eat the flapjacks and oatmeal with milk. The next day he would eat the steak and the oatmeal without milk. And not the bacon.</i></p>	<p>Page 224:  <i>Marven stared at the food in dismay. It’s not kosher, he thought. In Marven’s house it was against ancient Jewish law to eat dairy products and meat together. And never, ever, did a Jew eat bacon. Marven came to a quick decision. One day he would eat the flapjacks and oatmeal with milk. The next day he would eat the steak and the oatmeal without milk. And never the bacon.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels worried because the food is against his religion.</p> <p>Marven feels relieved to have a solution for the problem.</p>

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Juxtaposing text</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>What is Marven thinking/feeling?</b>
<p><i>Mr. Murray took Marven to the small office where he would work and sleep. In Duluth, Marven had to share a bedroom with his two younger sisters but this room</i></p>	<p>Page 220:  <i>Mr. Murray took Marven to the small office where he would work and sleep. In Duluth, Marven had to share a bedroom with his two younger sisters and all of their dolls and toys, but</i></p>	<p>Marven feels excited to have a place of his own.</p>

<i>was his and he liked it.</i>	<i>this room was his – all his - and he liked it.</i>	
<i>Marven was under the bearskin when he heard the first bell. The fire was out and the room was dark and cold. He lit the kerosene lamp and pulled on his clothes and coat.</i>	Page 221: <i>It seemed to Marven he had just crawled under the bearskin when he heard the first bell. The fire was out and the room was dark and cold. He lit the kerosene lamp and pulled on his double-thick long underwear, two pairs of socks, two pairs of knickers, and two sweaters. Then he put on his cut-down overcoat.</i>	Marven feels upset about having to get out of bed and go outside in the very dark and cold night.

**3. Subgroups apply the metalanguage independently:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they identify turned up/down language.

**Text segment for threesome:**

<b>Juxtaposing text</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>What is Marven thinking/feeling?</b>
<i>After the second bell, Marven heard the jacks heading toward the eating hall. It was nearly time for his first job.</i>  <i>He ran through the darkness to the bunkhouse, looked in, and counted five lumps in the shadows. Marven waited.</i>	Page 221: <i>After the second bell, Marven heard the jacks heading toward the eating hall. It was nearly time for his first job.</i>  <i>He ran through the cold morning darkness to the bunkhouse, peeked in, and counted five huge lumps in the shadows. Marven waited just inside the door.</i>	Marven feels anxious about waking the sleeping jacks.  Marven feels scared to enter the room.

<p><i>They got out of bed. Their shadows slid across the ceiling.</i></p> <p><i>Marven walked over to the bed, reached out, and tapped the jack's shoulder.</i></p> <p><i>The jack's beard ran right into his long shaggy hair; Marven couldn't find his ear to shout into.</i></p>	<p>Page 222: <i>One lump stirred, then another. They grunted, rolled, and climbed out from under the covers. Their huge shadows slid across the ceiling.</i></p> <p><i>One jack was still in the sack. Marven took a deep breath, walked bravely over to the bed, reached out, and tapped the jack's shoulder. It was like poking a granite boulder. The jack's beard ran right into his long shaggy hair; Marven couldn't even find an ear to shout into.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels awed by the size of the jack.</p> <p>Marven feels nervous about waking this sleeping jack.</p>
<p><i>"Will you get up?" Marven asked.</i></p> <p><i>Jean Louis made a noise and looked at him.</i></p> <p><i>"Please." Marven stood straight.</i></p>	<p>Page 222: <i>"Will you get up?" Marven asked anxiously.</i></p> <p><i>Jean Louis growled and fixed him in the hard blue squint of one eye.</i></p> <p><i>"Please." Marven stood straight and tried not to tremble.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels worried about how he's going to make this jack get up.</p> <p>Marven feels scared of the size and toughness of this jack.</p>

**Text segment for pair 1:**

<p><i>It was confusing. Sometimes two names were on one chit. These were called doublees; there were some triplees.</i></p> <p><i>Marven sat looking at the scraps. "There is no system!" he said. Where to begin?</i></p>	<p>Page 227: <i>It was all very confusing. Sometimes two names were on one chit. These were called doublees; there were even some triplees. This meant more calculations. And sometimes chits were in the wrong pay-period box.</i></p> <p><i>Marven sat staring at the scraps. "There is no system!" he muttered. Where to begin?</i></p>	<p>Marven feels confused by the chit system.</p> <p>Marven feels overwhelmed by the disorganized work he has to make sense of.</p>
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<p><i>By Friday of the second week, Marven had learned his job.</i></p> <p><i>Every day the routine was meals and work, and Marven kept to his office and away from the lumberjacks.</i></p>	<p>Page 227: <i>By Friday of the second week, Marven had learned his job so well that he finished early. He had not been on his skis since he had arrived at camp. Every day the routine was simply meals and work, and Marven kept to his office and away from the lumberjacks as much as he could. But today he wanted to explore, so he put on his skis and followed the sled paths into the woods.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels more confident about his work.</p> <p>Marven feels a little bored by how his days are spent.</p> <p>Marven still feels afraid of the lumberjacks.</p>
<p><i>He glided forward.</i></p> <p><i>This was different from city skiing in Duluth.</i></p>	<p>Page 227-8: <i>He glided forward, his skis making soft whisking sounds in the snow. This certainly was different from city skiing in Duluth, where he would dodge the ragman's cart or the milkman's wagon, where the sky was notched with chimney pots belching smoke, where the snow turned sooty as soon as it fell.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels delighted by how nice the skiing is here compared to his home town.</p>

**Text segment for pair 2:**

<p><i>The woods were still and white. Beads of ice glistened. The needles of pine and spruce pricked the eggshell sky, and the moon began to climb over the treetops.</i></p> <p><i>Marven came upon a frozen lake covered with snow, which lay in a circle of tall trees.</i></p>	<p>Page 228: <i>Here in the great north woods all was still and white. Beads of ice glistened like jewels. The frosted needles of pine and spruce pricked the eggshell sky, and a ghostly moon began to climb over the treetops. Marven came upon a frozen lake covered with snow, which lay in a circle of tall trees like a bowl of sugar. He skimmed out across it on his skis, his cheeks stinging in the cold air, and stopped in the middle to listen to the quietness.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels transported by this beautiful place.</p>
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<p><i>Marven began to tremble, but he knew he must remain still. Maybe, Marven thought, the grizzly would think he was a small tree growing in the middle of the lake. He tried to look like a tree. But concentrating on being a tree was difficult because Marven kept thinking about his family.</i></p>	<p>Page 228-9: <i>Marven began to tremble, but he knew he must remain still, very still. Maybe, Marven thought desperately, the grizzly would think he was a small tree growing in the middle of the lake. He tried very hard to look like a tree. But concentrating on being a tree was difficult because Marven kept thinking about the bundle on the train platform – his mother, his father, his two big sisters, his two little sisters. He belonged in Duluth with them, not in the middle of the great north woods with a grizzly.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels terrified by the possibility of a grizzly bear.</p> <p>Marven feels lonely for his family.</p>
<p><i>As they made their way back to the sled paths, Marven heard a French song.</i></p> <p><i>Evening shadows fell through the trees, and as Marven skied, he hummed the tune they were singing.</i></p>	<p>Page 231: <i>As they made their way back to the sled paths, Marven heard a French song drifting through the woods. The other jacks came down the path, their saws and axes slung across their shoulders, and Marven and Jean Louis joined them. Evening shadows fell through the trees, and as Marven skied alongside the huge men, he hummed the tune they were singing.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels comforted by the other jacks coming.</p> <p>Marven feels included in the group. He feels less intimidated.</p>

#### **DAY 4**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Visual organizer</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Organize important information	Subgroups present their findings; Teacher uses a visual organizer to display group work; Group discusses the writing prompt	Timeline	New situations can be both fascinating and intimidating. Marven experiences a lot of new things in this new place.

**1. Document student work as they report out on their analyses:**

- Use a “timeline” chart with headings referring to important stages of the story: Arriving at camp; Waking the jacks; Beginning work; Skiing
- Go through each stage and ask the groups to submit segments that go there. As they are offered, go over the analysis the groups did for each segment.
- We will consider whether Marven’s feelings are good or bad during each stage, and in different segments of each stage. Highlight these feelings in red (for bad feelings/intimidation) and green (for good feelings/fascination).
- This will result in a left-to-right representation of how Marven feels throughout the story, giving students a resource for evidence for the writing prompt and also representing the big idea in the text that new experiences can be both fascinating and intimidating. The chart will simply have the information from the charts above presented linearly and divided according to different story stages. It will look something like this (but less dense due to it being on a much larger scale):

Arriving at camp		Waking the jacks		First day		Skiing	
Page 218: <i>When they entered the building, the long shadows from the yard suddenly sprung to life. Marven stared. Immense men with long beards and wild hair</i>	Marven feels amazed by the size of these lumberjacks.  Marven feels mesmerized by their dancing.	Page 221: <i>It seemed to Marven he had just crawled under the bearskin when he heard the first bell. The fire was out and the room was dark and cold. He lit the kerosene lamp and pulled on his double-thick long underwe</i>	Marven feels upset about having to get out of bed and go outside in the very dark and cold night.	Page 224: <i>Marven stared at the food in dismay. It's not kosher, he thought. In Marven's house it was against ancient Jewish law to eat dairy products and meat together. And never, ever, did a Jew eat bacon. Marven came to a quick decision.</i>	Marven feels worried because the food is against his religion.  Marven feels relieved to have a solution for the problem.	Page 227: <i>By Friday of the second week, Marven had learned his job so well that he finished early. He had not been on his skis since he had arrived at camp. Every day the routine was simply meals and work, and Marven kept to his office and away from the</i>	Marven feels more confident about his work.  Marven feels a little bored by how his days are spent.  Marven still feels afraid of the lumberjacks.



<p>were jumping around to the fiddler's tunes like a pack of frantic grizzly bears. They were the biggest and wildest men Marven had ever seen.</p> <p>Marven could have watched the dancing all night, but Mr. Murray said, "Come on, Marven. We start early in the morning. I'll show you</p>		<p>ar, two pairs of socks, two pairs of knickers, and two sweaters. Then he put on his cut-down overcoat.</p>		<p>One day he would eat the flapjacks and oatmeal with milk. The next day he would eat the steak and the oatmeal without milk. And never the bacon.</p>		<p>lumberjacks as much as he could. But today he wanted to explore, so he put on his skis and followed the sled paths into the woods.</p>	
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<i>where you'll be living.</i> ”							
Page 220: <i>Mr. Murray took Marvin to the small office where he would work and sleep. In Duluth, Marvin had to share a bedroom with his two younger sisters and all of their dolls and toys, but this room was his – all his - and he liked it.</i>	Marven feels excited to have a place of his own.	Page 221: <i>After the second bell, Marvin heard the jacks heading toward the eating hall. It was nearly time for his first job.</i>  <i>He ran through the cold morning darkness to the bunkhouse, peeked in, and counted five huge lumps in the shadows. Marvin waited just inside the door.</i>	Marven feels anxious about waking the sleeping jacks.  Marven feels scared to enter the room.	Page 227: <i>It was all very confusing. Sometimes two names were on one chit. These were called doublees; there were even some triplees. This meant more calculations. And sometimes chits were in the wrong pay-period box.</i>  <i>Marven sat staring at the scraps. “There is no system!” he muttered. Where to begin?</i>	Marven feels confused by the chit system.  Marven feels overwhelmed by the disorganized work he has to make sense of.	Page 227-8: <i>He glided forward, his skis making soft whisking sounds in the snow. This certainly was different from city skiing in Duluth, where he would dodge the ragman’s cart or the milkman’s wagon, where the sky was notched with chimney pots belching smoke, where the snow turned sooty as soon as it fell.</i>	Marven feels delighted by how nice the skiing is here compared to his home town.
		Page 222:	Marven feels			Page 228: <i>Here in the</i>	Marven feels

		<p><i>One lump stirred, then another. They grunted, rolled, and climbed out from under the covers. Their huge shadows slid across the ceiling.</i></p> <p><i>One jack was still in the sack. Marven took a deep breath, walked bravely over to the bed, reached out, and tapped the jack's shoulder. It was like poking a granite boulder. The jack's beard</i></p>	<p>awed by the size of the jack.</p> <p>Marven feels nervous about waking this sleeping jack.</p>			<p><i>great north woods all was still and white. Beads of ice glistened like jewels. The frosted needles of pine and spruce pricked the eggshell sky, and a ghostly moon began to climb over the treetops. Marven came upon a frozen lake covered with snow, which lay in a circle of tall trees like a bowl of sugar. He skimmed out across it on his skis, his cheeks stinging in the cold air, and stopped in the middle to listen to the quietness.</i></p>	<p>transported by this beautiful place.</p>
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		<p><i>ran right into his long shaggy hair; Marven couldn't even find an ear to shout into.</i></p>					
		<p>Page 222:  <i>"Will you get up?" Marven asked anxiously .</i></p> <p><i>Jean Louis growled and fixed him in the hard blue squint of one eye.</i></p> <p><i>"Please. "</i></p> <p><i>Marven stood straight and tried not to tremble.</i></p>	<p>Marven feels worried about how he's going to make this jack get up.</p> <p>Marven feels scared of the size and toughness of this jack.</p>			<p>Page 228-9:  <i>Marven began to tremble, but he knew he must remain still, very still. Maybe, Marven thought desperately , the grizzly would think he was a small tree growing in the middle of the lake. He tried very hard to look like a tree. But concentrating on being a tree was difficult because Marven kept thinking</i></p>	<p>Marven feels terrified by the possibility of a grizzly bear.</p> <p>Marven feels lonely for his family.</p>

						<p><i>about the bundle on the train platform – his mother, his father, his two big sisters, his two little sisters. He belonged in Duluth with them, not in the middle of the great north woods with a grizzly.</i></p>	
						<p>Page 231:  <i>As they made their way back to the sled paths, Marven heard a French song drifting through the woods. The other jacks came down the path, their saws and axes slung across their shoulders, and Marven and Jean Louis joined</i></p>	<p>Marven feels comforted by the other jacks coming.</p> <p>Marven feels included in the group. He feels less intimidated.</p>

						<i>them. Evening shadows fell through the trees, and as Marven skied alongside the huge men, he hummed the tune they were singing.</i>	
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**2. Revisit the prompt:**

- Post two pieces of chart paper with the following headings:
  - *Marven will be happy in the Great North Woods.*
  - *Marven will want to go to home.*
- Discuss the prompt as a group, prompting the use of information in the chart to support positions. This activity is intended to prime them to write, but not to be an exhaustive exploration of each position.

**Some suggested points for each position to bring up in the discussion:**

<i>Marven will be happy in the Great North Woods.</i>	<i>Marven will want to go home.</i>
<p>Marven is fascinated by the jacks.</p> <p>Marven is growing a lot, getting over his fears and learning new things.</p> <p>Marven loved his time skiing in the woods.</p> <p>Marven has his own space now, without his sisters.</p>	<p>Marven is the only kid, surrounded by all these huge men.</p> <p>Marven’s job is kind of terrible – boring and unpleasant.</p> <p>Marven can’t enjoy the food and lives in a small little room.</p> <p>Marven misses his family.</p>

## DAY 5

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Prompt</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Engage in writing to the prompt	Students write responses to the prompt	Will Marven be happy in the Great North Woods or want to go back home?	New situations can be both fascinating and intimidating. Marven experiences a lot of new things in this new place.

### **1. Present the writing prompt:**

- Remind students to state their position and use the text to support their answers.
- Explain that the objective is to write essays that could convince someone who has another position to change his/her mind.

### **2. Students write to the prompt for the rest of the session:**

- Students will have access to the text and the visually organized information from previous days.
- Students will write totally independently, without teacher or peer input.

**Toto unit: FGA-supported text-based discussion**

**Big idea:** Sometimes an important experience can change us forever. Both Toto and Suku are never the same after this adventure.

**Writing prompt:** Who changed more on that day, Toto or Suku?

\*

**DAY 1**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Interactively read the text	Prime background knowledge about the concepts and theme; Introduce and read the text	Being timid; Wanderlust; Wild game reserves & poaching	Sometimes an important experience can change us forever. Both Toto and Suku are never the same after this adventure.

**1. Describe the story and explore the theme:** “In this story *Toto*, a timid young boy living in Africa comes to the rescue of a curious elephant who wanders away from his family. Both of them see themselves and their lives differently after this adventure.”

***Being timid:***

- Explain the idea of being timid: “Being timid is the opposite of being brave. When you are brave, you will face things even if they are scary. When you are timid, you fear things, even if they are unlikely or not-so-scary. You might be timid of certain specific things, people, or situations, or you might be timid in general and scared of all sorts of new experiences.”
- Provide an example of being timid: “I was timid when we first started this project because I felt nervous about coming into the school, setting up all these cameras, pulling you guys out of class. But now I’m not timid about it anymore because it is familiar. That is an example of being timid about a specific situation. Another example of being timid in general is my husband. He is timid about meeting new people and he tends to be very quiet and reserved until he gets more comfortable.”
- Ask students if they have any examples of being timid.
- Connect the idea of being timid to the text/prompt: “In this story, a little boy name Suku is very timid about doing what the other boys in his village do – going out with the other boys to graze their cattle near the wild animals. So he does a lot of work around home that the women usually do and he gets teased for it.”

***Wanderlust:***

- Explain the idea of wanderlust: “Wanderlust is a strong desire to travel and explore the world. Some people can’t wait to go on trips or to leave their homes when they are done with school to go out and see different places.”



- Provide an example of wanderlust: “Some students use a semester of school to ‘study abroad.’ They go to school in another country for a while. This is appealing to people who have wanderlust.”
- Ask students if they know anyone who has wanderlust.
- Connect the idea of wanderlust to the text/prompt: “In this story, a little elephant named Toto is very curious about the world outside of his elephant herd family. He has wanderlust. He dreams about going off to explore on his own. And one day, he does.”

**2. Prime background knowledge:** “Before we read, let’s discuss this place in Africa where the characters live. Then we’ll read about Toto’s and Suku’s experiences.”

***Wild game reserves & poaching:***

- Explain key points about wild game reserves and poaching to orient students to the story:
  - “A game reserve is an area of land set aside for protecting the environment. Many game reserves are located in Africa. Most are open to the public, and tourists commonly take sightseeing safaris. A game reserve is more than just a big zoo; it is a place where ecosystems are protected and conserved. Suku lives near a reserve and he is timid about getting near it because of the wild animals that live there.”
  - “Poaching is when plants or animals are illegally taken, like from protected reserves. Sometimes people sneak on the land to hunt with guns or set traps to catch animals. This is illegal, but it still happens and Suku and Toto encounter something like this in the story.”

**3. Read the text:** “When we read, I want you to pay attention to what Toto and Suku are doing and saying and thinking and feeling, to see how they change by the end of the story.”

***Stopping points:***

p. 32 “thatched hut” – small house woven out of leaves and sticks

p. 32 “valley” – opposite of a mountain; big dip down

p. 33 “herds” – groups

p. 33 “roamed” – walked around

p. 34 “doused” – got something all wet

p. 34 “stray” – wander away

p. 35 “compound” – an area enclosed by a fence or wall

p. 35 “herd” – gather together animals

p. 35 “grazing” – animals eating

p. 35 “jauntily” – happily

p. 35 “brandishing” – waving

p. 35 “crude” – simple; basic

p. 36 “ancestors” – dead relatives

p. 36 “enviously” – jealously; wishing it was him

p. 36 “mock” – pretend

p. 36 “bulk” – massive size

p. 37 “stalk” – hunt

p. 38 “sharp” – intense; stinging

p. 38 “trumpeted” – made the sound of an elephant

p. 38 “papyrus reeds” – a kind of long plant

p. 39 “clutching” – holding tightly in the hand

p. 39 “rustling” – “shhhhh” sound

p. 39 “snare” – trap that wraps around with a cord

p. 39 “flesh” – skin and muscle

p. 40 “cunning” – sneaky; not actually in the reserve but so close

p. 40 “wounded” – hurt; injured

p. 41 “pleaded” – begged

p. 41 “despair” – frustrated sadness

p. 41 “clearing” – open space with no trees

p. 43 “haughty” – snooty and confident

p. 43 “stiffen” – tense up your muscles

p. 43 “advancing” – coming

p.44 “game warden” – person in charge of managing wildlife

p. 44 “Landrover” – type of car for rough terrain

p. 44 “menacing” – threatening; dangerous

p. 44 “mustering” – gathering

p. 44 “summoned” – called

p. 44 “withdraw” – go away

p. 45 “hide” – animal skin

p. 45 “nuzzled up close to his mother’s flank” – cuddled up to her side

p. 45 “contentedly” – peacefully and happily

**4. Reveal writing prompt:** Who changed more on that day, Toto or Suku?

## DAY 2

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Important ideas</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Reread the text and gather important information	Subgroups reread segments of the text to identify whether Suku is being timid or brave and whether Toto has wanderlust or is content to be with his family	Being timid; Wanderlust	Sometimes an important experience can change us forever. Both Toto and Suku are never the same after this adventure.

### **1. Assign groups and text segments:**

- Break students into subgroups (two pairs and a threesome). The pairs will have one struggling comprehender and either a typical or advanced comprehender, and the threesome will have one advanced, one typical, and one struggling comprehender.
- Assign each group certain segments of the text to analyze.
- Give each group charts with their assigned text segments.

### **2. Explain the task:**

- There will be two sets of charts and text segments – one for Toto and one for Suku. The charts will have two columns. Suku’s will be labeled “timid and afraid” and “confident and brave.” Toto’s will be labeled “has wanderlust” and “wants to be home.”
- Ask students to read the cards with the text segments on them and decide which category they should go into for each character. They should stick the text under the appropriate heading on their charts.

### **3. Model and practice the task:**

- Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segments about Suku doing women’s chores and about Suku knowing he has to lead the elephant home. Fill in the model chart.
- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segments about Suku being afraid to walk into the bush and about Suku not realizing he was doing exactly what the village boys do. Fill in the model chart.

“Suku and Toto change during this adventure. We’re going to reread these segments and look at how they exhibit changes in their thoughts or behaviors.”

**Text segment for modeling:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 36:  <i>So Suku went on doing women’s chores around the village and avoiding the boys who teased him.</i></p>	
<p>Page 41:  <i>“What are we going to do?” Suku asked in despair. “Will I have to lead you back to your family, you foolish little one?”</i></p> <p><i>Suku didn’t want to go into the bush.</i></p>	

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
	<p>Page 41:  <i>But [Suku] looked at the elephant baby and knew that there was no choice.</i></p> <p><i>Suku began to walk, and the small elephant followed.</i></p>
	<p>Page 42:  <i>Suku was so busy following the trail that he hadn’t thought much about what he was doing. Suddenly he realized he was walking all by himself across the open grasslands. Just like the herd boys. And he didn’t even have an iron spear for protection – nothing but a small reed cutting knife!</i></p>

**4. Circulate to scaffold and reinforce:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they assign feelings to certain segments and extend their reasoning.

**Text segments for threesome:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 32-3:  <i>Suku had often climbed to the top of the tallest hill and had watched the herds of animals moving through the grasslands below. But that was as far as he ever went. His world was outside the protected game reserve – with his family, in the safe familiar village.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 39:  <i>Suddenly the silence at the river was broken by a loud rustling sound. The sound came again – not just a rustling this time, but a snapping of twigs and a swishing of the tall grasses. Carefully, and a little fearfully, Suku moved around the next curve in the path. And then he stopped again.</i></p>
<p>Page 43:  <i>“Oh, please, make him go away, make him go away,” Suku prayed silently. His hand around the knife handle felt clammy and stiff. It seemed to him that he and the elephant and the lion had stood there facing one another, forever.</i></p>	

<b>Toto</b>	
<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
	<p>Page 34:  <i>When his mother warned him never to stray outside their peaceful valley because there were dangers beyond the hills, Toto listened. Most of the time he was happy to play with his cousins among the thorn trees and with his friends, the antelope and the baby baboons.</i></p>
<p>Page 36:  <i>Sheltered by his mother’s bulk, Toto watched for a while. Then, looking up at the velvety sky, he saw that the moon had traveled across the valley and was about to dip down below the highest hill.</i></p> <p><i>I wonder where she goes, Toto thought. Perhaps I’ll just follow the river a little ways and see. Not very far – just to where the river curves.</i></p>	

	<p>Page 38:  <i>Nothing his mother had told him about danger had prepared Toto for this. In fear and pain he trumpeted loudly. But he had walked too far to be heard. There was no answering call from his mother or from any of the other elephants. For the first time in his life, Toto was alone.</i></p>
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**Text segments for pair 1:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 35:  <i>But in the morning, when the boys and young men of the village went out to herd their cattle on the rich grazing lands in the valley, Suku did not go with them.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 42:  <i>He walked on, trying not to think about the dangers. By now the sun was high in the sky, and at home they were surely wondering what had happened to him.</i></p>
	<p>Page 45:  <i>The warden's words made Suku feel good. He knew that he hadn't felt brave, but he had walked in the footsteps of his ancestors: he had gone into the bush, and he had faced a lion!</i></p>

<b>Toto</b>	
<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
<p>Page 34:  <i>But sometimes Toto looked toward the blue and purple hills in the distance and wondered what lay behind their rounded crests.</i></p>	
<p>Page 36:  <i>Slowly Toto moved away from the group of elephants. Nobody noticed. Not even his mother. But once he was in the shadows of the trees, the moon was no longer there to guide him.</i></p>	

	<p>Page 45:  <i>Under the leafy canopy of the forest Toto nuzzled up close to his mother's flank. He had eaten his fill of crisp greens at the riverbank, and his mother had bathed his cut foot and smeared it with healing red mud. Now the herd was resting quietly in the shade near the river.</i></p>
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**Text segments for pair 2:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 35:  <i>[Suku] watched when the herd boys walked jauntily out of the village, brandishing their wooden staffs and shouting to their charges. At seven he was old enough to go, but Suku was frightened when he thought of the herd boys walking through the bush with nothing but a stick or crude iron spear to protect them from lions.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 43:  <i>Suku's fist tightened around the handle of his knife. He wasn't sure at all whether the knife would do him any good, but he was prepared to defend himself if the lion attacked.</i></p>
	<p>Page 45:  <i>Now [Suku] would never feel shy of the village boys again. He knew he had earned his place in the tribe.</i></p>

<b>Toto</b>	
<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
<p>Page 36:  <i>And inside the ring of gently rolling purple hills, Toto, the little elephant, roamed with the herd across the grasslands. But whenever he saw the young weaverbirds flying from their hanging straw nests, he watched enviously as they sailed off into the sky far, far beyond the circle of hills.</i></p>	
<p>Page 37:  <i>Toto walked on through the darkness. Sometimes he could see the moon reflected on the river, and he hurried to catch up with it.</i></p>	

	Page 45: <i>It was good to be back home, Toto thought contentedly. Let the moon and the sun and the birds travel beyond the hills if they wished. His place was here.</i>
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### DAY 3

Goal	Activity	Important ideas	Big idea
Familiarize students with the FGA metalanguage	Model and practice the application of the FGA metalanguage to the text	Process types	Sometimes an important experience can change us forever. Both Toto and Suku are never the same after this adventure.

**1. Explain the FGA metalanguage:** “We’ve talked about the participants in sentences – the people, animals, or even things that are written about. Writers can’t just have participants, though. The participants have to do things, think things, feel things, say things. These behaviors are called *processes* and there are several types we are going to talk about today and look for in our text.” [Below is a guiding script.]

***Doing and saying processes:***

Sometimes a participant does something, takes action. These are called *doing* processes. Some show a lot of action and we can really see it:

*Moe ran.*

*Moe jumped.*

*Moe threw the ball.*

Some show less action, but we can still picture it:

*Moe wrote a letter.*

*Moe took a picture.*

*Moe tapped Mrs. K on the shoulder.*

Let’s look at our processes here: *ran, jumped, threw the ball, wrote a letter, took a picture, tapped Mrs. K. on the shoulder.* What other behaviors could a participant, like Moe, do that we would be able to picture, to see the action happening? [List suggestions.]



Sometimes a participant says something, and we can imagine hearing it. Different *saying* processes can make it sound different.

*“Let’s go,” Moe said.*

*“Let’s go,” Moe whispered.*

*“Let’s go,” Moe shouted.*

*“Let’s go,” Moe laughed.*

Can you think of other *saying* processes? [List suggestions.]

### ***Sensing and being processes:***

There are some processes that are a bit trickier. Sometimes a participant doesn’t really engage in a behavior that we can picture. Sometimes, instead, the author tells us what the participant is feeling or what the participant simply is. So if we think back to the ideas of *showing vs. telling*, a *doing* or *saying* process shows us things – we can picture it and learn about the character that way – but other processes tell us things that we can’t visualize.

*Sensing* processes tell us that the participants have something going on in their brains. They are thinking something, feeling something, experiencing something. Here are some examples of thinking:

*Moe thought about his day.*

*Moe remembered what he did that day.*

*Moe forgot to start the camera.*

Here are some examples of feeling:

*Moe felt sad about his day.*

*Moe feared what would happen.*

*Moe felt sick that day.*

*Moe regretted what he did.*

Here are some examples of experiencing something:

*Moe saw the sun rise.*

*Moe heard his alarm clock.*

*Moe felt his mom shaking him awake.*

*Moe tasted his coffee.*

Can you think of other processes that show what a participant thinks, feels, or experiences?

*Being* processes are simple in a way, but sometimes hard to spot because of the way the wording is. These processes simply tell us a participant “is” something. But the “is” changes depending on the tense and the number of participants, and there are a few other *being* processes that aren’t just “is.”

*Moe is nice.*

*Moe and his brother are nice.*

*Moe was nice.*

*Moe and his brother were nice.*

*Moe has some nice qualities.*

*Moe has a dog.*

*Moe had a nice day.*

*Moe seems nice.*

*Moe appears to be a nice guy.*

Just remember, if you can't picture it happening (like a *doing* or a *saying* process) and it doesn't talk about thoughts, feelings, or sensations, it might be a *being* process that simply tells you about the participant.

Now we're going to go back to the story and see how Suku's and Toto's processes show us their change. Their thoughts and feelings change, and their actions show us these changes too. So today we're going to go back to our text segments and determine if the processes written in red are *doing/saying*, or *sensing/being* processes, to see how the author shows us these changes in the characters.

## 2. Model and practice applying the metalanguage to the text:

Model the task for the group with a text segment. Use the segments about Suku doing women's chores and about Suku knowing he has to lead the elephant home. Fill in the model chart.

- Practice the task as a whole group with a text segment. Use the segments about Suku being afraid to walk into the bush and about Suku not realizing he was doing exactly what the village boys do. Fill in the model chart.
- Use different colored post-it for the *showing* and the *telling* processes (i.e., showing = doing and saying; telling = being and sensing).

### Text segment for modeling:

Suku	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
Page 36: <i>So Suku went on doing women's chores around the village and avoiding the boys who teased him.</i>	
	Page 41: <i>But he looked at the elephant baby and knew that there was no choice.</i>  <i>Suku began to walk, and the small elephant followed.</i>

**Text segment for practicing:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 41:  <i>“What are we going to do?” Suku asked in despair. “Will I have to lead you back to your family, you foolish little one?”</i></p> <p><i>Suku didn’t want to go into the bush.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 42:  <i>Suku was so busy following the trail that he hadn’t thought much about what he was doing. Suddenly he realized he was walking all by himself across the open grasslands. Just like the herd boys. And he didn’t even have an iron spear for protection – nothing but a small reed cutting knife!</i></p>

**3. Subgroups apply the metalanguage independently:**

- Circulate to listen in on groups.
- Reinforce, challenge, and assist them as they identify the process types.

**Text segments for threesome:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 32-3:  <i>Suku had often climbed to the top of the tallest hill and had watched the herds of animals moving through the grasslands below. But that was as far as he ever went. His world was outside the protected game reserve – with his family, in the safe familiar village.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 39:  <i>Suddenly the silence at the river was broken by a loud rustling sound. The sound came again – not just a rustling this time, but a snapping of twigs and a swishing of the tall grasses. Carefully, and a little fearfully, Suku moved around the next curve in the path. And then he stopped again.</i></p>

<p>Page 43:  <i>“Oh, please, make him go away, make him go away,” Suku prayed silently. His hand around the knife handle felt clammy and stiff. It seemed to him that he and the elephant and the lion had stood there facing one another, forever.</i></p>	
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<b>Toto</b>	
<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
	<p>Page 34:  <i>When his mother warned him never to stray outside their peaceful valley because there were dangers beyond the hills, Toto listened. Most of the time he was happy to play with his cousins among the thorn trees and with his friends, the antelope and the baby baboons.</i></p>
<p>Page 36:  <i>Sheltered by his mother’s bulk, Toto watched for a while. Then, looking up at the velvety sky, he saw that the moon had traveled across the valley and was about to dip down below the highest hill.</i></p> <p><i>I wonder where she goes, Toto thought. Perhaps I’ll just follow the river a little ways and see. Not very far – just to where the river curves.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 38:  <i>Nothing his mother had told him about danger had prepared Toto for this. In fear and pain he trumpeted loudly. But he had walked too far to be heard. There was no answering call from his mother or from any of the other elephants. For the first time in his life, Toto was alone.</i></p>

**Text segments for pair 1:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 35:  <i>But in the morning, when the boys and young men of the village went out to herd their cattle on the rich grazing lands in the valley, Suku did not go with them.</i></p>	

	<p>Page 42:  <i>He walked on, trying not to think about the dangers. By now the sun was high in the sky, and at home they were surely wondering what had happened to him.</i></p>
	<p>Page 45:  <i>The warden's words made Suku feel good. He knew that he hadn't felt brave, but he had walked in the footsteps of his ancestors: he had gone into the bush, and he had faced a lion!</i></p>

<b>Toto</b>	
<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
<p>Page 34:  <i>But sometimes Toto looked toward the blue and purple hills in the distance and wondered what lay behind their rounded crests.</i></p>	
<p>Page 36:  <i>Slowly Toto moved away from the group of elephants. Nobody noticed. Not even his mother. But once he was in the shadows of the trees, the moon was no longer there to guide him.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 45:  <i>Under the leafy canopy of the forest Toto nuzzled up close to his mother's flank. He had eaten his fill of crisp greens at the riverbank, and his mother had bathed his cut foot and smeared it with healing red mud. Now the herd was resting quietly in the shade near the river.</i></p>

**Text segments for pair 2:**

<b>Suku</b>	
<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<p>Page 35:  <i>He watched when the herd boys walked jauntily out of the village, brandishing their wooden staffs and shouting to their charges. At seven he was old enough to go, but Suku was frightened when he thought of the herd boys walking through the bush with nothing but a stick or crude iron spear to protect them from lions.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 43:  <i>Suku's fist tightened around the handle of his</i></p>

	<i>knife. He wasn't sure at all whether the knife would do him any good, but he was prepared to defend himself if the lion attacked.</i>
	Page 45: <i>Now he would never feel shy of the village boys again. He knew he had earned his place in the tribe.</i>

<b>Toto</b>	
<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
Page 36: <i>And inside the ring of gently rolling purple hills, Toto, the little elephant, roamed with the herd across the grasslands. But whenever he saw the young weaverbirds flying from their hanging straw nests, he watched enviously as they sailed off into the sky far, far beyond the circle of hills.</i>	
Page 37: <i>Toto walked on through the darkness. Sometimes he could see the moon reflected on the river, and he hurried to catch up with it.</i>	
	Page 45: <i>It was good to be back home, Toto thought contentedly. Let the moon and the sun and the birds travel beyond the hills if they wished. His place was here.</i>

#### **DAY 4**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Visual organizer</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Organize important information	Subgroups present their findings; Teacher uses a visual organizer to display group work; Group discusses the writing prompt	Before/During/After matrix with the characteristic categories	Sometimes an important experience can change us forever. Both Toto and Suku are never the same after this adventure.

#### **1. Document student work as they report out on their analyses:**

- Create a matrix with “before/during/after” as the rows and the characteristics used earlier as the columns.

- For each character, trace the way they change as the story progresses, and which processes show that change.
- We will discuss how dramatic the changes are and whether or not they are likely to last.
- This will result in a top-to-bottom representation of how the two characters change during the story, giving students a resource for evidence for the writing prompt and also showing two important ideas: 1. Suku’s outward processes help him overcome his internal processes to create a change. 2. Toto is happy at home in general, but has wanderlust shown by his internal processes, but his external processes lead him to an internal process of feeling alone, which returns him to a place of being content, without the internal wanderlust. The charts will simply have the information from the charts above, reordered sequentially and with rows labeled to divide “before/during/after” the adventure. They will look something like this (but less dense due to it being on a much larger scale):

	<b>Suku</b>	
	<i>Timid and afraid</i>	<i>Confident and brave</i>
<b>Before</b>	<p>Page 32-3:  <i>Suku had often climbed to the top of the tallest hill and had watched the herds of animals moving through the grasslands below. But that was as far as he ever went. His world was outside the protected game reserve – with his family, in the safe familiar village.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 35:  <i>But in the morning, when the boys and young men of the village went out to herd their cattle on the rich grazing lands in the valley, Suku did not go with them.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 35:  <i>He watched when the herd boys walked jauntily out of the village, brandishing their wooden staffs and shouting to their charges. At seven he was old enough to go, but Suku was frightened when he thought of the herd boys walking through the bush with nothing but a stick or crude iron spear to protect them from lions.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 36:  <i>So Suku went on doing women’s chores around the village and avoiding the boys who teased him.</i></p>	

<b>During</b>		<p>Page 39:  <i>Suddenly the silence at the river was broken by a loud rustling sound. The sound came again – not just a rustling this time, but a snapping of twigs and a swishing of the tall grasses. Carefully, and a little fearfully, Suku moved around the next curve in the path. And then he stopped again.</i></p>
	<p>Page 41:  <i>“What are we going to do?” Suku asked in despair. “Will I have to lead you back to your family, you foolish little one?”</i></p> <p><i>Suku didn’t want to go into the bush.</i></p>	
		<p>Page 41:  <i>But he looked at the elephant baby and knew that there was no choice.</i></p> <p><i>Suku began to walk, and the small elephant followed.</i></p>
		<p>Page 42:  <i>Suku was so busy following the trail that he hadn’t thought much about what he was doing. Suddenly he realized he was walking all by himself across the open grasslands. Just like the herd boys. And he didn’t even have an iron spear for protection – nothing but a small reed cutting knife!</i></p>
		<p>Page 42:  <i>He walked on, trying not to think about the dangers. By now the sun was high in the sky, and at home they were surely wondering what had happened to him.</i></p>



		<p>Page 43:  <i>Suku's fist tightened around the handle of his knife. He wasn't sure at all whether the knife would do him any good, but he was prepared to defend himself if the lion attacked.</i></p>
	<p>Page 43:  <i>"Oh, please, make him go away, make him go away," Suku prayed silently. His hand around the knife handle felt clammy and stiff. It seemed to him that he and the elephant and the lion had stood there facing one another, forever.</i></p>	
<b>After</b>		<p>Page 45:  <i>The warden's words made Suku feel good. He knew that he hadn't felt brave, but he had walked in the footsteps of his ancestors: he had gone into the bush, and he had faced a lion!</i></p>
		<p>Page 45:  <i>Now he would never feel shy of the village boys again. He knew he had earned his place in the tribe.</i></p>

	<b>Toto</b>	
	<i>Has wanderlust</i>	<i>Wants to be home</i>
		<p>Page 34:  <i>When his mother warned him never to stray outside their peaceful valley because there were dangers beyond the hills, Toto listened. Most of the time he was happy to play with his cousins among the thorn trees and with his friends, the antelope and the baby baboons.</i></p>
<b>Before</b>	<p>Page 34:  <i>But sometimes Toto looked toward the blue and purple hills in the distance and wondered what lay behind their rounded crests.</i></p>	

	<p>Page 36:  <i>And inside the ring of gently rolling purple hills, Toto, the little elephant, roamed with the herd across the grasslands. But whenever he saw the young weaverbirds flying from their hanging straw nests, he watched enviously as they sailed off into the sky far, far beyond the circle of hills.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 36:  <i>Sheltered by his mother’s bulk, Toto watched for a while. Then, looking up at the velvety sky, he saw that the moon had traveled across the valley and was about to dip down below the highest hill.</i></p> <p><i>I wonder where she goes, Toto thought. Perhaps I’ll just follow the river a little ways and see. Not very far – just to where the river curves.</i></p>	
<b>During</b>	<p>Page 36:  <i>Slowly Toto moved away from the group of elephants. Nobody noticed. Not even his mother. But once he was in the shadows of the trees, the moon was no longer there to guide him.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 37:  <i>Toto walked on through the darkness. Sometimes he could see the moon reflected on the river, and he hurried to catch up with it.</i></p>	
	<p>Page 38:  <i>Nothing his mother had told him about danger had prepared Toto for this. In fear and pain he trumpeted loudly. But he had walked too far to be heard. There was no answering call from his mother or from any of the other elephants. For the first time in his life, Toto was alone.</i></p>	

<b>After</b>		Page 45: <i>Under the leafy canopy of the forest Toto nuzzled up close to his mother’s flank. He had eaten his fill of crisp greens at the riverbank, and his mother had bathed his cut foot and smeared it with healing red mud. Now the herd was resting quietly in the shade near the river.</i>
		Page 45: <i>It was good to be back home, Toto thought contentedly. Let the moon and the sun and the birds travel beyond the hills if they wished. His place was here.</i>

**2. Revisit the prompt:**

- Post two pieces of chart paper with the following headings:
  - *Suku changed more.*
  - *Toto changed more.*
- Discuss the prompt as a group, prompting the use of information in the chart to support positions. This activity is intended to prime them to write, but not to be an exhaustive exploration of each position.

**DAY 5**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Prompt</b>	<b>Big idea</b>
Engage in writing to the prompt	Students write responses to the prompt	Who changed more on that day, Toto or Suku?	Sometimes an important experience can change us forever. Both Toto and Suku are never the same after this adventure.

**1. Present the writing prompt:**

- Remind students to state their position and use the text to support their answers.
- Explain that the objective is to write essays that could convince someone who has another position to change his/her mind.

**2. Students write to the prompt for the rest of the session:**

- Students will have access to the text and the visually organized information from previous days.
- Students will write totally independently, without teacher or peer input.

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