

Exploring Predictors of Quality Engagement in Literature Circle Discussions

Chase J. Young

McKinney Independent School District

Abstract

This study investigates how reading ability and personality traits predict the quality of verbal discussions in peer-led literature circles. Third grade literature discussions were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The coded statements and questions were quantified into a quality of engagement score. Through multiple linear regression, the researcher sought to determine the best predictors of verbal engagement in literature circle discussions. Results indicated that higher reading ability and extroversion along with lack of conscientiousness were significant predictors of quality verbal engagement in literature circle discussions. Finally, implications for instructional design are discussed.

Exploring Predictors of Quality Engagement in Literature Circle Discussions

Literature circles are generally understood as peer-led student groups reading the same text with an opportunity to discuss content (Daniels, 1994). The goal of literature circles is to enhance the comprehension of text in a motivating and authentic manner.

Although there are many forms of literature circles, most versions share some common factors. Groups are formed based on individual reading preferences. This initial choice is a key feature of literature circles that promote reader engagement (Daniels, 2002; Flowerday, Schraw, & Stevens, 2004). The opportunity to discuss is another integral element when implementing literature circles. The discussions provide an avenue for learning through social interaction (Vygotskiï & Cole, 1978). Beyond these key features, literature circles bifurcate, and manifest themselves in a many different forms.

Daniels (1994) introduced a version of literature circles that possesses the key features described above, as well as structural roles for discussion. Roles such as discussion director, word wizard, connector, summarizer, or illustrator were given to students in preparation for the literature discussion. In fact, many interpretations of literature circles, or book clubs, assign roles to participants (Pearson, 2010; Sandmann & Gruhler, 2007; Tompkins & Tompkins, 2001). In support of this perspective, research indicates that students prefer some sort of preparatory work prior to discussion (Evans, 2002). However, preparatory methods vary in implementation.

Some researchers argue that limiting students to roles in literature circles potentially inhibits the discussion (Pearson, 2010). They suggest a less restricted model. Assigning roles limits the free-flowing aspect of the discussion. The aim is to deviate from traditional discursive patterns in classrooms (e.g. initiate, respond, evaluate), and move towards more authentic conversations (Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995). Teachers and researchers now look to differing methods to achieve higher levels of engagement by eliminating inhibitory factors such as roles in discussion as well as balance of power within the discussion, especially in regards to the discussion director role. In an effort to eliminate the hierarchical structure of literature circles, alternative forms of literature circles emerge.

A different form of literature circles eliminates the use of roles, and changes the preparatory process for discussion. Research (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) suggests that summarizing, making connections, and word study are helpful reading strategies. Still, absent in the literature is the notion that they should only be utilizing one skill per discussion, as in role abiding literature circles. Using multiple comprehension strategies at once advised over isolated use. Therefore, literature circles began using the method of generating questions (Long & Gove, 2003), as well as tapping underlying comprehension strategies as a foundation for discussion (Clark, 2009; Lloyd, 2004).

A foundation for high level discussion techniques can be instilled in students, allowing them to extend above and beyond a teacher's expectations. An important reading comprehension strategy is the generation of questions (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). This is a good start when training

students to think critically about their reading (Long & Gove, 2003). It is even more useful when interacting with their peers in literature circles as the questions become a basis for conversation, thus adding structure, but in a less restrictive manner.

Ideally, the students are free to engage in high quality discussion about their texts. The teacher creates conditions for emergent discussions. The discussants are not confined to one comprehension strategy, and are therefore free to utilize strategies that best fit the discussion. However, even with the open structure, teachers still wonder if it is enough to ensure quality verbal engagement. There are other factors at work when students get together and discuss, perhaps some factors that are beyond the control of the teacher, but could be accounted for in design.

Existing research on literature circles focuses on the different forms of implementation, but never personality factors of the students involved. These factors arguably influence engagement. Because literature discussions are cooperative learning situations, human factors like personality cannot be ignored (Chan, 2010). This study aims to answer the following research question: To what extent do personality factors and reading proficiency explain the quality of verbal engagement in literature circle discussions? Finally, instructional implications are explored.

Method

Context and Participants

This research was conducted in a suburban school district in the Southwest. The elementary school is located in a middle class neighborhood serving 18% economically disadvantaged students. Student demographics in the school are 58% white (non-

Hispanic), 19% Hispanic, 14% black (non-Hispanic), 8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and <1% Native.

The research participants were students in the first author's third grade class. All students were invited to participate in the research. In the end, a total of 27 students were included in the study, and 25 were included in the analysis due to attrition. There were 10 females, and 17 males, none of which were identified as English language learners although one student speaks English as a second language.

The teacher (author) is both the primary researcher and teacher of record. He possesses a master's degree in elementary reading and literacy. He is also pursuing a PhD in reading education. The elementary school practices departmentalization in his grade level, therefore he teaches two sections of language arts. Both classes were included in the study. The 2010-2011 school year marks his sixth year teaching, and first time teaching third grade. He was previously a literacy coach and second grade teacher.

Preparing Student for Literature Circles

The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) analyzed experimental studies in reading. The analysis revealed that generating questions is an effective means for developing reading comprehension. Costa's (Costa & Kallick, 2000) three levels of questioning were used to teach students to generate important high level questions. Cognitive dissonance, or inquiry, is used to engage the minds of students. This mentality contends that discrepancy in content raised by the teacher or student is highly engaging when striving for understanding.

Generating questions was the foundation for discussion in the type of literature circles employed in the first author's classroom.

Level 1 questions only require input. For example, these questions ask students to name, identify, recall, or define. The answers to level 1 questions are extrapolated from the text, and require no further processing or output (Costa & Kallick, 2000). The next two levels reflect higher-order thinking questions. Level 2 questions ask students to process information. Examples of this are asking students to make analogies, compare and contrast, synthesize, summarize, analyze, or infer. Level 3 questions elicit output. This type of questioning engages students in evaluating, generalizing, imagining, judging, speculating, or predicting (for more examples see Table 1, *Costa & Kallick, 2000*, or visit www.habits-of-mind.net).

Table 1: Leveled questions based on Confession by Bruce Lansky (Lansky, 2010): The story of a messy teacher who does not want anyone to find out.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
What did the teacher eat?	Is there anyone you know like this teacher?	What would it be like to live like this teacher?
What did the teacher waste through the night?	Can you compare yourself to the teacher?	What do you think will happen if the students find out?
Who should not find out?	What is this poem mostly about?	What would it be like to such a slob?

Question Generation Training

The three levels of questioning were introduced through an adaptation of the Concept Attainment Strategy (CAS) (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2000). The strategy is built on the premise, "that which you discover, you own." CAS essentially requires students to inductively create the characteristics of a concept before it is named. Once students

understood the concept, the teacher modeled the strategy of generating questions while reading. After a gradual release of responsibility, students were able to generate questions about their reading. The students practiced question generation for two weeks. Students sometimes produced unimportant questions; therefore lessons on asking important questions were delivered to clarify question generation as a comprehension strategy, not simply busy work.

Discussion Practice

Once the students had been trained in high level questions strategies, they viewed several recordings of the first author's previous class' literature discussions. In a grand conversation, the students described what they had observed. After the initial viewing, the teacher distributed the rubric (Appendix A). Students watched another discussion, focused on one student, and assessed the student based on the rubric.

After the students were familiar with the rubric, and had observed real literature based discussions, they engaged in a practice round of literature circles. Instead of novels, the students chose from a variety of short poems from GigglePoetry.com (Lansky, 2010). The students were given five minutes to read the poem and write questions down on whiteboards. Subsequently, students met with their groups, and discussed the poems using the questions as the basis for discussion. Finally, students were interviewed. During the interview each student evaluated themselves base on the rubric and gave specific reasons for their self assessment. For example, one student said, "I believe I was an expert because I asked a lot of questions, made some connections.

Feedback

During the training period, teachers have a significant role in giving feedback to the literature circle members. While the members discuss the reading, teachers note specific types of responses and questions observed. In addition, teachers write down strengths of the conversation as a whole, and aspects that need improvement to be discussed during the reflection phase.

The following example is from the first literature circle meeting in a third grade classroom. This group read the first chapter in Horrible Harry's Secret, a DRA level 24. The group consisted of students reading slightly below grade level. This is an exact representation of the notes taken during the group's discussion. The codes appear first, and any additional notes follow (see Figure 1 for Discussion Codes).

Figure 1. Example of Discussion Codes

I = Inference

P = Prediction

C = Connection

C/C=Compare/Contrast

Q1 = Level 1 Question

Q2 = Level 2 Question

Q3 = Level 3 Question

TE = Used text evidence

D = Stated details from the story

AP = Author's Purpose

Robin

Q2, P, I, D, D, I, I, I, I, I

Ask more questions, and make predictions

Ryan

I, Q2, I, Q2, D, I, I, I, Q2

Need predictions, connections, and level 3 questions

Carol

I, I, TE, I, I, D, I, Q2, I, D, P

Missing connections, level 3 questions, and needs to ask more questions

Randy

Q2, P, I, D, Q2, I, P, I, I, Q2, D, Q2, I, P, I

Need connections and level 3 questions

The teacher reads the notes back to the student. For example, “Ryan, you made an inference, followed by a level 2 question, another inference, a level 2 question, gave details, made three inferences in a row, and finally asked a level 2 question.” The feedback is descriptive and immediate. At this point, only note the strengths, and commend students for their specific contributions. Students can now reflect on the discussion to prepare for their self-evaluation. However, once the teachers are no longer coaching, students must base their evaluations on memory, what is written down, and their other group members’ accounts of the discussion.

Grouping

The students were given three choices of books to read. Students were called up strategically, as the choices varied slightly with ability levels. Student reading levels were based on their Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1991) scores in conjunction with current running records and MAP scores; however, more weight was

given to the DRA. The books were leveled based on the Fountas and Pinnell system (Pinnell & Fountas, 2007). The book readabilities ranged from end of second grade level to middle of fourth grade. Students were allowed to read the backs of the novels, thumb through them, and skim the pages to determine their interest level. Although the teacher controlled student choice by students' zone of proximal development, student interest was responsible for group formation. After students chose their books, the new groups were announced (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Groups by pseudonym, MAP testing percentile, and DRA

<i>Dinosaurs Before Dark</i> Level 28			<i>They Came from Center Field</i> Level 40			<i>Dinosaurs Before Dark</i> Level 28			<i>Holes</i> Level 50		
Name	%ile	DRA	Name	%ile	DRA	Name	%ile	DRA	Name	%ile	DRA
Mike	48		Billy	96		Scott	48		Logan	83	
Marie	68		Amy	65		Tyler	80		Cherie	87	
Kat	73		Meagan	78		Sean	35		Danny	97	
			John	76							
			Wes	90							
<i>Chocolate Touch</i> Level 30			<i>Dinosaurs Before Dark</i> Level 28			<i>Holes</i> Level 50					
Name	%ile	DRA	Name	%ile	DRA	Name	%ile	DRA			
Holly	21		Justin	37		Matt	95				
Olivia	51		Kim	91		Julie	70				
Brian	65		Ron	21		Jeremy	83				
Andrew	45		Andy	40							
April	40		Jake	54							

Reading and Discussing

Students engaged in literature circles every day for 35 minutes—30 for reading, and five for discussion. Students typically read one chapter per day. Some groups decided to read more because their book contained shorter chapters. After completing their reading, they read independently until it was time to discuss. This gave groups with longer chapters, or slower paced readers, time to complete their reading before the discussion. After 30 minutes, students convened in their groups and entered discussion for approximately five minutes.

Data Collection

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)

The MAP test administered in the fall of 2010 was used to determine reading percentile. The Reading MAP test is a computer assessment that assesses student academic achievement and progress. The test is based on item response theory where the test reacts to student responses, thus becoming more difficult or easier. In the end, the assessment produces a variety of reading measures including the percentile score used in this study (Northwest Evaluation Association, 2011).

Literature Circle Discussions

Each participating group engaged in a short discussion each day. The primary researcher filmed each group twice, thus collecting seven to ten minutes of discussion for each group. The students were not told when their groups were to be filmed, as the teacher simply followed a rotation schedule. Some days were skipped due to student absences, school wide functions, or early release. In the end, the researchers analyzed a grand total of 27 minutes.

After the video was transcribed, discussions were coded based on the three story intellect (Costa & Kallick, 2000), and yielded a .79 inter-rater reliability. The primary researcher and Connie Briggs from Texas Women's University discussed discrepancies until reaching 100% agreement. Statements and questions were awarded one, two or three points (see Figure 3). The first level is an input level. Some examples of level one include recall, describe, name, or identify. Essentially, only the text is needed. The next level, processing, requires thought from the reader. The reader is required to

summarize, compare, sequence, infer, or analyze. The third level requires output. Some examples of this level include evaluating, speculating, predicting, generalizing, or judging. The points were totaled to create a Quality of Verbal Engagement (QVD) score (see Table 2).

Figure 3. Coding

Input = 1 point

Process = 2 points

Output = 3 points

Coded Example from Holes Transcription

Matt: What is A.G.? [Infer = 2]

Jeremy: Yeah, what does that mean? [Speculating = 3]

Julie: Well, it didn't really say that—it just said it was on the suitcase. [Recall = 1]

Jeremy: Well, first, Stanley just thought it was probably a word. [Recall = 1]

Julie: Maybe it's like initials. [Infer = 2]

Jeremy: He thought it was Adgy. [Recall = 1]

Matt: It's probably initials. [Infer = 2]

Table 2. MAP Reading Percentile and QVD

Measure	Mean	Min	Max	SD
MAP Percentile	64.68	21	97	23.43
QVD	18.24	4	37	10.34

The Big Five Personality Factors

A ten item inventory was utilized to quantify five dimensions of student personalities: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and

openness (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). The researcher met with each student individually and recorded responses of their self report. The one on one context was provided to ensure students understood the scale, the adjectives, and were able to accurately report. Research suggests that children can accurately self report measures of the Big Five (Measelle, John, Ablow, Cowan, & Cowan, 2005). After students completed the inventory, the raw scores were translated into the Big Five personality factors (see Table 3).

The Big Five personality traits are extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability (also referred to as neuroticism), and openness. Extroverted students are enthusiastic and energetic. Agreeableness can be understood as compassion and the ability to cooperate. When a student is efficient and organized, they are described as conscientious; therefore, a lack of conscientiousness would be characterized by disorganization, carelessness, and spontaneity. Emotional stable students are secure and confident. Openness measures a student's propensity to enjoy new experiences or the level of curiosity a student exhibits (Anusic, Schimmack, Pinkus, & Lockwood, 2009; Barbaranelli, Caprara, Rabasca, & Pastorelli, 2003).

Table 3. Big Five Student Self Report Data

Measure	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Extroversion	4.6	2.5	7	1.16
Agreeableness	5.02	2.5	7	1.2
Conscientiousness	5.58	3	7	1.1
Emotional Stability	4.66	1.5	7	1.53
Openness	5.46	3.5	7	1.24

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through multiple linear regression in R (R Development Core Team, 2010). Quality of Verbal Discussion (QVD) score is the dependent variable, and the predictor variables are 1) MAP percentile 2) Extroversion 3) Agreeableness 4) Conscientiousness 5) Emotional Stability and 6) Openness. A global test of model assumptions (global statistic, skewness, kurtosis, heteroscedasticity, and link function) were all met. No outliers were detected by the Bonferonni test with a significance of $p < 0.05$. The variance inflation factor was examined to test for multicollinearity and returned false; therefore, predictors can be analyzed individually.

Results

Question: To what extent do personality traits and reading proficiency explain the quality of verbal engagement in literature circle discussions?

According to the summary of the regression model the students' MAP percentile is the largest predictor of QVD. The MAP percentile represented the reading ability of the student. According to Table 4, reading ability as measured by MAP was significant at the 0.01 level—the strongest predictor in the regression. Conscientiousness is also a significant ($p < 0.05$) predictor of QVD. However, the estimate is negative. The negative slope suggests that a lack of conscientiousness predicts higher QVD. The third significant ($p < 0.05$) predictor is extroversion. As students' extroversion increases, so does their QVD.

Prior to the regression, a power analysis for linear multiple regression was conducted. The upper bound degrees of freedom was 6, the lower bound 18, effect size

(F^2) of 0.15 and significance was set at 0.05. The resulting power statistic suggested the researcher needed an R-squared greater than 0.19.

The adjusted R-squared is 0.4882, therefore significance is assumed. According to the adjusted R-squared, 48.48% of the variance in QVD is explained by the statistically significant predictors. The results would support the hypothesis that personality factors should be factored into the design of literature circles.

Table 4. Summary of Regression Model

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	27.4824	11.4761	2.395	0.02772 *
MAP Percentile	0.2704	0.0690	3.919	0.00101 **
Extroversion	2.9672	1.3738	2.160	0.04452 *
Agreeableness	-1.6956	1.4716	-1.152	0.26432
Conscientiousness	-4.0255	1.4783	-2.723	0.01395 *
Emotional Stability	-0.6334	1.0589	-0.598	0.55720
Openness	-1.1825	1.4182	-0.834	0.41532

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.398 on 18 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.6162, Adjusted R-squared: 0.4882

F-statistic: 4.816 on 6 and 18 DF, p-value: 0.004274

Discussion

This study examined QVD in an open ended version of literature circles. The aim was to explore personality factors and reading proficiency in relation to the QVD in peer-led literature discussions. The results indicated that higher reading ability and extroversion along with lower conscientiousness predicted 48.82% of the variance in QVD.

Although the results seem intuitive, this study is important because it empirically introduces new factors to account for when implementing or assessing literature circles. If the true purpose of literature circle discussions is to increase the quality of understanding, then the design should focus on the environment in addition to preparatory methods and use of comprehension strategies.

Because personality factors are beyond the control of the teacher, literature circle design should strive to make the personality factors insignificant. This could be done by establishing group norms that foster inclusion. For example, students should be taught to notice students not participating, and specific protocol for inclusionary methods could be initiated. A simple inquiry such as, "What do you think, Danny?" Or, specific questions could be directed to more introverted students, "Hannah, why do you think the character was afraid?" The protocol could be taught explicitly, and coached during literature circle meetings.

In addition, alternative methods of assessment should be employed. Highly introverted and conscientious students may not project their true understanding of text during discussion. This could be accounted for by allowing students to journal their personal understanding of the text, and new understanding based on the discussion.

The use of writing prompts could help students juxtapose their personal understanding with the meaning derived from discussion. For example, “I thought...” would prompt personal reflection, but “My group thought...” or “A group member helped me understand...” prompts meaning established in the group discussion (for more prompts see Appendix B).

It is warranted to reiterate the importance of quality reading instruction from the teacher (Mathes et al., 2005). Reading ability, the strongest predictor, is under the control of the teacher. Literature circles alone are not a sufficient reading program. While they provide ample time for practice in an authentic context, specific reading skills and strategies should be taught in other aspects of the balanced literacy program.

This study agrees with the contention that more proficient readers are typically more proficient discussants (Almasi, O'Flahavan, & Arya, 2001). However, because the groups were heterogeneous, the social interaction with knowledgeable others potentially benefited all students involved in the discussion (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978). This study did not examine this aspect; therefore, the extent of learning through social interaction is unclear. Future research could explore quality of comprehension after the discussion.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample size was small. Although the power analysis revealed an acceptable statistic and assumptions for multiple linear regression were met, an increase in sample size would have strengthened the study. Next, the quasi-experimental design utilized a convenience sample. The researcher only included students in his third grade class. Finally, no other studies exist that used similar coding for QVD, therefore no comparative analysis could be conducted.

However, future research could investigate different forms of literature circles with a similar coding mechanism. Other instructional episodes such as teacher led grand conversations could also be analyzed. The research could compare the QVD in peer-led and teacher-led literature discussions.

Conclusion

This method of literature circles is in constant state of construction. The main focus in redesign is to improve students' quality of understanding text. The discussion techniques promote an exploratory method for negotiating meaning in groups. The teacher creates conditions for emergent comprehension in a complex adaptive discussion. Exploring factors in literature circle discussions should help teachers frame the design in a manner that maximizes successful engagement of all students.

References

- Almasi, J. F., O'Flahavan, J. F., & Arya, P. (2001). A comparative analysis of student and teacher development in more and less proficient discussions of literature. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(2), 96. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=4388986&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Anusic, I., Schimmack, U., Pinkus, R. T., & Lockwood, P. (2009). The nature and structure of correlations among big five ratings: The halo-alpha-beta model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*(6), 1142-1156. doi:10.1037/a0017159

Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., Rabasca, A., & Pastorelli, C. (2003). A questionnaire for measuring the big five in late childhood. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 34(4), 645. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=8996800&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Chan, P. K. W. (2010). Enhancing cooperative learning: Human factors. *New Horizons in Education*, 58(2), 136-139. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=56543694&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Clark, K. F. (2009). The nature and influence of comprehension strategy use during peer-led literature discussions: An analysis of intermediate grade students' practice. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48(2), 95-119. doi:10.1080/19388070802226295

Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. (2000). *Activating & engaging habits of mind*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Daniels, H. (1994). *Literature circles : Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom*. York, Me.: Stenhouse Publishers.

Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles : Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups* (2nd ed.). Portland, Me.: Stenhouse Publishers.

Evans, K. S. (2002). Fifth-grade students' perceptions of how they experience literature discussion groups. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 37(1), 46-69.

doi:10.1598/RRQ.37.1.2

Flowerday, T., Schraw, G., & Stevens, J. (2004). The role of choice and interest in reader engagement. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 72(2), 93-114. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ744768&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; <http://www.heldref.org/jexpe.php>

Goatley, V. J., Brock, C. H., & Raphael, T. E. (1995). Diverse learners participating in regular education 'book clubs.'. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(3), 352-380.

doi:10.2307/747621

Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2003). A very brief measure of the big-five personality domains. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37(6), 504-528.

doi:10.1016/S0092-6566(03)00046-1

Lansky, B. (2010). *Funny poetry for children*. Retrieved 7/28/2010, 2010, from

<http://www.gigglepoetry.com/>

Lloyd, S. L. (2004). Using comprehension strategies as a springboard for student talk.

Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48(2), 114-124. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=14694567&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Long, T. W., & Gove, M. K. (2003). How engagement strategies and literature circles promote critical response in a fourth-grade, urban classroom. *Reading Teacher*, 57(4), 350-361. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=11578557&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Mathes, P. G., Denton, C. A., Fletcher, J. M., Anthony, J. L., Francis, D. J., & Schatschneider, C. (2005). The effects of theoretically different instruction and student characteristics on the skills of struggling readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(2), 148-182. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ684359&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.40.2.2>

Measelle, J. R., John, O. P., Ablow, J. C., Cowan, P. A., & Cowan, C. P. (2005). Can children provide coherent, stable, and valid self-reports on the big five dimensions? A longitudinal study from ages 5 to 7. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(1), 90-106. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.89.1.90

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the national reading panel. teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction (NIH publication no. 00-4769)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Northwest Evaluation Association. (2011). *Computer-based adaptive assessments | northwest evaluation association (NWEA)*. Retrieved 4/23/2011, 2011, from <http://www.nwea.org/products-services/computer-based-adaptive-assessments>

Pearson, C. (2010). Acting up or acting out? unlocking children's talk in literature circles. *Literacy*, 44(1), 3-11. doi:10.1111/j.1741-4369.2010.00543.x

Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2007). *The continuum of literacy learning, grades K-8 : Behaviors and understandings to notice, teach, and support*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

R Development Core Team. (2010). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria: ISBN 3-900051-07-0, URL <http://www.R-project.org/>.

Sandmann, A., & Gruhler, D. (2007). Reading is thinking. *International Journal of Learning*, 13(10), 105-113. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=24953882&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Silver, H. F., Strong, R. W., & Perini, M. J. (2000). *So each may learn :Integrating learning styles and multiple intelligences*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Tompkins, G. E., & Tompkins, G. E. (2001). *Literacy for the 21st century :A balanced approach* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill.

Vygotskiĭ, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society : The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Appendix A

Evaluation	Respect, Attention, Participation (RAP)
Elite	<p>Discussion is clear and concise.</p> <p>Discussion is thoughtful and insightful (inferential marathon).</p> <p>Student examines author’s purpose.</p> <p>Includes details that help the reader understand events from the text.</p> <p>Poses many important questions that extend beyond the text (mostly level 2 or 3).</p> <p>Makes predictions about future events.</p> <p>Makes connections to the text and beyond.</p> <p>Uses text evidence.</p>
Expert	<p>Discussion is clear.</p> <p>Discussion is somewhat thoughtful.</p> <p>Includes some details that help the reader understand events from the text.</p> <p>Poses questions from the text and beyond (level 1-3).</p> <p>Makes predictions about future events.</p> <p>Makes connections to the text.</p> <p>Uses text evidence.</p>
Intermediate	<p>.This discussion is functional.</p> <p>Includes some details that help the reader understand events from the text.</p> <p>Poses a question from the text (level 1).</p> <p>Makes a prediction about future events, but they don’t make sense.</p> <p>Makes some connections to the text that do not aid in understanding.</p>

	References text, but text does not support claim.
Beginner	<p>This entry is not clear.</p> <p>Includes few details that help the reader understand events from the text.</p> <p>Poses no questions from the text.</p> <p>Makes few or misleading predictions about future events.</p> <p>Makes few connections to the text.</p> <p>Does not reference text.</p>

Appendix B

Journal Prompts

I wonder

I realized

I can connect with

This is giving me the idea that

I think

I disagree with

I wish

I hope

I know

I predict

I think the main idea is

I think the main idea of the chapter is

There is one thing I do not like, and it is

The author should have

I think ____ is like ____ because

This connects with

One of my group members thought

(Name) helped me understand

I partly agree with

At first I thought...now I think...

I agree with

My favorite part

I don't know why

I liked

I think the author's purpose is

I was surprised

I was confused

I used context clues