A First Grade Teacher’s Implementation of the Multicultural Read Aloud Lesson in Voices Reading: How Active Participatory Structure and Personal Relevance are Used to Mediate Text Engagement

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A FIRST GRADE TEACHER’S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL READ ALOUD LESSON IN *VOICES READING*: HOW ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURE AND PERSONAL RELEVANCE ARE USED TO MEDIATE TEXT ENGAGEMENT

By

Kristen B. Doorn

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2014
A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A FIRST GRADE TEACHER’S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL READ ALOUD LESSON IN *VOICES READING*: HOW ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURE AND PERSONAL RELEVANCE ARE USED TO MEDIATE TEXT ENGAGEMENT

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A First Grade Teacher’s Implementation of the Multicultural Read Aloud Lesson in *Voices Reading*: How Active Participatory Structure and Personal Relevance are Used to Mediate Text Engagement

Abstract of a dissertation at the University of Miami.

Dissertation supervised by María S. Carlo, Ph.D.

No. of pages in text. (181)

This study focuses on the implementation of a multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson by a first grade teacher using the *Voices Reading* literacy curriculum during a six-week summer academic program for students at risk for academic failure who lived in a primarily black, low income, urban community in the southeastern region of the United States. The study examined how the teacher promoted an active participatory structure during the read aloud lesson and how this aspect of her teaching was guided by the curriculum and program context. The study used a case study approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 2006) and thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clark, 2006; O’Leary, 2009). The analysis was based on the coding of seven read aloud lessons by the first grade teacher in the summer program. The coding of the data served to identify instances during instruction where the teacher promoted an active participatory structure during discussion about the text. Analysis of the interactions revealed that the parts of the lesson most helpful in supporting this active participatory structure took place when the teacher and students engaged in repetitive instances of ongoing dialogue or exchange reflected in continuous, sustained conversations, with the purpose of constructing meaning around a particular topic or idea, as opposed to simply extracting information.
from the text they are reading. These particularly rich exchanges are characterized by the following: a) integration of open-ended questions (e.g., factual/recall, inferential, or opinion/evaluative), as well as follow-up probing and elaboration by the teacher; and b) the welcoming of student interjections by the teacher, reflective of their thoughts and ideas surrounding the text. Furthermore, the read aloud lessons were characterized by a significant amount of teacher and student interaction and dialogue surrounding the text reading as a whole. In addition, an active participatory structure, as well as personal relevance, established through a co-construction of meaning, were supported through the teacher’s utilization of the curriculum as a guiding framework during instruction. The teacher also relied upon her own cultural competence to make choices regarding the discursive language style that she utilized during instruction, reflective of her students’ prior knowledge and cultural backgrounds.
DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to the people who are most important in my life.

First, to my family and friends, particularly my parents, Bill and Sheri Bengtson, for their love and support throughout the years, and especially during these last months in providing extra care for Jake. I thank you most of all for the value of faith that you have given me in my life, and for helping me realize that education is truly a gift that you can always carry with you for a lifetime.

To my baby boy, Jake Doorn, for his love and patience during the first year of life as I completed this final stage of my studies. I do not deserve to be your “mama”, but I’m so blessed to have you in my world. I look forward to seeing you grow into a young man, as you pursue your own goals, dreams, and adventures. Te quiero mucho; Ik hou van je.

And especially to my husband, Jim Doorn, for his never ending and unconditional love. You have supported me in this process from the beginning, and I couldn’t have made it through without you. Thank you for always standing by me as I pursue my goals and passions, including this one. I am blessed to have you as my partner and best friend in life, and look forward to our continued journey in this world together.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank several people who have made this work possible.

My committee members, Dr. Laura Kohn-Wood, Dr. Jennifer Langer-Osuna, and Eduardo Negueruela-Azarola, for reviewing and assisting me with my dissertation at its various stages and providing invaluable feedback throughout the process.

Dr. Jeanne Shay Schumm, my advisor, for her invaluable guidance and encouragement, as well as other faculty members and colleagues within the Teaching and Learning division, for their support and mentoring.

Dr. Shantell Saunders, my second coder, for her support and patience as we worked coding the data supporting this research study together.

Ms. LM, the teacher who inspired this study. You are an incredible educator and I admire your passion and dedication to the profession incredibly. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work with you in this capacity and for graciously being willing to be a part of my research.

And especially, Dr. María Carlo, my chair, who has been a wonderful mentor over the past several years. You are an incredible scholar, who I admire and respect, and I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to work under your advisement. I thank you for your patience, support and encouragement during this dissertation process, as well as during my time in the doctoral program.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview of Current Research

Research has shown that effective read alouds are integral to early reading instruction for young, emergent readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Edwards Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008; Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004). However, fewer studies have been conducted which reference what teachers do during read aloud instruction (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Fien et al., 2011; Morrow, 1988), and how the curriculum that they utilize supports this teaching (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008). In addition, there continue to be discrepancies between the classroom practices of teachers during read alouds and those that are most effective in supporting the foundational literacy skills of emergent readers (Beck & McKeown, 2001). Furthermore, while the implementation of effective read alouds based upon models of successful reading argue that readers actively construct meaning from text by putting together ideas and integrating them with prior knowledge (Beck, McKeown, Sandora, & Kucan, 1996), the conversation that takes placed surrounding text reading in many classrooms does not encourage a transactional dialogue that supports shared construction of thoughts and ideas between the teacher and the student (Cazden, 1998; Wiseman, 2011). Instead, there is often too much emphasis placed solely on how to build specific literacy skills, such as comprehension, fluency, or vocabulary, rather than engaging students in topics in a critical and significant way through a classroom structure involving shared, interactive participation (Wiseman, 2011). While the building of these aforementioned skills is important, the read aloud experience can also provide opportunities for complex thinking and learning when
students have the opportunity to share and contribute to meaning-making surrounding text, which helps in the development of a literacy knowledge within the classroom.

Adding to this, much of the research pertaining to read aloud instruction has been conducted with younger children who have not yet entered school (Karweit & Wasik, 1996; Wasik & Bond, 2001), although many first grade students have been identified as being at risk for reading failure, especially those that are from families that are challenged by socioeconomic difficulties (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hall & Williams, 2010; RAND Reading Study Group & Snow, 2002; Van Kleeck & Stahl, 2003), and those from diverse backgrounds (Edmonds, 2005; Hammond, Rhodes Hoover, & McPhail, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Finally, despite the prominence of basal reading programs throughout the majority of first grade classrooms in the United States, and their substantial influence on instruction (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998), there are few studies which review basal reading series and how they systematically support students’ reading development, specifically through read aloud instruction and the integration of children’s literature. Nevertheless, research supports the idea that there are consistent practices that can help foster young, emergent readers’ development of literacy skills through the integration of read alouds (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997; Beck et al., 1996; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Teale & Martinez, 1996); and furthermore, that a curriculum which incorporates read aloud instruction (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Fien et al., 2011) and authentic engagement with rich children’s literature (Hoffman et al., 1998; Martinez & McGee, 2000; Pearson & Duke, 2002; 2004; Williams & Bauer, 2006; Wiseman, 2011) can also support this development.
Introduction to the Current Study

For the reasons outlined above, this study addresses how a first grade teacher utilizes a multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson to mediate students’ engagement with text. I approach my research regarding a teacher’s implementation of an instructional read aloud using two theoretical frameworks: constructivism (Beck et al., 1996; Fosnot, 2005a; Gordon, 2009; Kintsch, 2009) and situated cognition (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997a; Robbins & Aydede, 2009). Using these two frameworks, I argue that the implementation of a read aloud lesson is representative of an active learning process, in which knowledge is constructed. Reflective of this idea, learners are not simply involved in receiving information or acquiring knowledge passively, but rather are actively engaged in the process of knowledge building, and the role of instruction is to guide their learning activities and to make knowledge building possible (Kintsch, 2009). Reflective of this, there are aspects of knowledge building which are critical to instruction. First of all, it must be remembered that knowledge construction takes place in a context when a learner is consciously engaged in that process. In addition, knowledge is based upon a shared, cultural understanding (Kintsch, 2009), and an analysis of meanings, specifically the meanings of words and language, is linked to the individual experience and social processes (von Glaserfield, 2005). More specifically, during the read aloud experience, the teacher can be seen as mediator of reading experience, supporting students’ text engagement as she creates an active participatory structure within the classroom, which supports students’ engagement with text. Beck and colleagues (1996) highlight current models of reading which define reading as a constructive endeavor, in which readers are actively engaged in making sense of the text.
they encounter, by putting together new ideas and connecting them to their prior knowledge. This can be done, they suggest, by supporting collaborative discussions as part of classroom literacy instruction.

Moreover, the read aloud lesson is also representative of a situated learning activity carried out by a classroom teacher that is used to support students’ engagement as they construct meaning from text, which in turn supports their development of literacy skills. A guiding principle of situated cognition is the idea that learning is always situated. Reflective of this, school learning, describe Sawyer and Greeno (2009), “is situated in a setting of a complex social organization that contain learners, teachers, curriculum materials, software tools, and the layout of the physical environment” (p. 348). This theoretical framework acknowledges the idea that we’re not only engaged in learning as individuals, but we are also engaged in a larger community of the worlds of each other and of ourselves, as well as the things that surround us. As such, the evolution of our learning depends upon our cognitive and transformative engagement with ourselves, our surroundings and others (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997a). During the read aloud activity, the teacher’s instruction must be reflective of the community of learners that she teaches. Because reading is an activity which requires effort and choice, motivation is also crucial to reading engagement. It is important to remember that even readers that possess the strongest cognitive skills may not spend much time engaged in reading if they simply are not motivated to read (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2004). In this sense, the teacher, again, can be seen as a mediator of the reading experience, as she creates personal relevance for students surrounding text reading which supports their text engagement. Furthermore, based on Vygotsky’s
sociocultural perspective and ideas surrounding culturally responsive instruction, González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) argue that children have unique life experiences and capabilities, or funds of knowledge, that have given them prior knowledge that are to be valued, rather than viewed as deficits. As such, students bring this knowledge from their backgrounds to their school environments and it is the job of teachers to build upon it during their reading instruction to create an effective pedagogy in their classrooms reflective of the uniqueness and diversity of each learner.

Representative of these ideas, this study focuses on the implementation of a multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson by a first grade teacher using the *Voices Reading* curriculum during a six-week summer academic program for students who are at risk for academic failure in a primarily black, low income, urban community in the southeastern region of the United States. The *Voices Reading* curriculum aims to assist teachers as they conduct literacy instruction that is based upon the personal experiences of children, helping them not only learn the skills of reading and writing, but also the important capabilities of discussing, listening, and thinking about the things they read and write. This basal reading series, therefore, provides literacy support, with emphasis on best practices, while aligning instruction with important themes of character development to advance the social and emotional growth of students. Its distinctive integration of instructional read alouds, which are the centerpiece of the curriculum, and infused concepts of character development, specifically identity awareness, intends to allow learners the opportunity to reflect, express, and connect literacy experiences with their own personal lives and the real world in a meaningful way (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a).
Furthermore, the present study highlights how the rich, read aloud literature utilized as a
part of this curriculum, reflective of multicultural trade books written by professional children’s authors, supports this implementation. More specifically, the study examines how the teacher promotes an active participatory structure, referred to henceforth as APS, to mediate students’ text engagement, as they construct meaning from text during this activity, and how this aspect of her teaching is guided by the curriculum and program context. The object of study for this research is the multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson, as carried out by the teacher, and the theoretical frameworks guiding the research are constructivism and situated cognition. These read aloud lessons are representative of interactive readings of authentic, multicultural literature in a whole-group setting which provides students with rich content and text for discussion and instruction. The unit of analysis in the research is read aloud instruction, as supported by the Voices Reading curriculum, which includes the practices of the teacher, the dialogue that takes place during classroom instruction, and the how the curriculum and program context support these aspects of classroom teaching and learning.

In particular, this study contributes to the knowledge base of literacy instruction for young emergent readers in diverse settings. While much research in the field of reading has been conducted in the past decades, much more emphasis needs to be placed on how students understand text, or rather, the processes of text comprehension, as well as the instructional methods used to improve this comprehension (Kintsch, 2004). We need to continue to learn about what practices teachers carry out during read aloud instruction to help develop students’ overall literacy skills in these settings, and, because of their importance, how the curriculum used as a part of basal reading series supports this. For diverse learners, including students who struggle with reading, from at-risk
readers to those who are English language learners, reflected often by lower reading achievement scores, successful literacy experiences implemented by classroom by teachers are integral to these individuals’ reading development and achievement (Medina & Schumm, 2012). In fact, decades of research which focuses on familial aggregation of reading problems suggest that children whose parents or older siblings have shown signs of reading difficulties are at greater risk, themselves, than children of similar backgrounds. Factors that have revealed themselves as potential family risk factors include family history of reading problems, home literacy environment, verbal interaction, home language other than English, use of a non-standard dialect of English in the home, as well as family-based socioeconomic status (SES). In particular, the opportunities that a child has at home to develop literacy skills in the early years before he/she formally enters school relate to the acquisition of attitudes towards literacy, knowledge regarding the purpose of reading and concepts regarding print and texts, as well as skills such as vocabulary growth and letter knowledge that continue to expand and contribute positively to a child’s learning once he/she begins schooling. Once a child enters schools, the contributions of the home environment may alter, to include reading to and with a child, supporting him/her with homework, and providing a supportive learning environment (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Children in African American communities and poor, urban areas, such as the one in this study, are faced with particular challenges, due to historical burdens of denied access to education, separate and unequal education, as well as substandard education, (Edmonds, 2005; Hammond et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Teachers of these learners, suggests Strickland (2005), can provide academic support by integrating more comprehensive and meaningful approaches to
instruction in their classrooms, going above and beyond the emphasis on low-level, basic skills that often place an unintentional ceiling on learning. In addition, they can engage students actively in reading and discussing multicultural trade books, like those supported by the *Voices Reading* curriculum, which pertain to their own personal and cultural experiences and prior knowledge, allowing them to make connections with text (Akanbi, 2005; Au, 2001). The utilization of this type of powerful literature provides an avenue for students to explore their thinking and the world around them in a deep and meaningful way (Tropp Laman, 2006). By engaging in this type of literacy instruction, teachers can help African American students become more critically engaged in literacy experiences which they find meaningful (Hammond et al., 2005). Finally, teachers of these students can view literacy as a cultural practice, reflective of culturally responsive teaching methods (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994), which fosters the interaction of culture and heritage. As such, the literacy practices and discourses of children’s homes and communities are valued and legitimized as holding communicative purpose and power (Au & Jordan, 1981; Heath, 1983; Lazar, 2011).

**Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In this first chapter, I provide an introduction and broad overview of the research pertaining to this dissertation study, which seeks to understand the instructional read aloud practices of a first grade teacher as she mediates her students’ engagement with texts utilized as part of the *Voices Reading* curriculum in a summer academic program for students who are at risk for academic failure. More specifically, I hope to understand how the teacher supports an APS during
her read aloud instruction, and how this aspect of her teaching is guided by the curriculum and program context.

In Chapter Two, I offer an in-depth look at the two theoretical frameworks that guide my research, constructivism, as well situated cognition, and more importantly, how these frameworks provide a lens for which to think about the reading process, as well as reading instruction. Constructivism looks at reading as a way of constructing meaning from text which precipitates understanding and learning. It highlights the idea that during exemplary reading instruction, readers are actively, versus passively, involved as they engage with text, and that understanding this text and creating meaning surrounding it requires readers be able to explain the new information received as they read, connect it to their prior knowledge, and use it subsequently to support their understanding. Furthermore, situated cognition supports the idea that reading instruction, an activity supporting literacy development, is socially situated, and thus reflects broader social practices which reach beyond the individual participating in the activity. As such, exemplary reading instruction takes into account the community of learners where the reading activity takes place, as well as the knowledge, personal experiences, and goals of each of these learners. In this chapter, I also look at how motivation relates to constructivism and situated cognition and plays an integral role in the reading process, as well as reading instruction, and how culturally responsive teaching, an additive approach to instruction which honors the diversity of student backgrounds, can also support reading instruction. In the second part of Chapter Two, I continue with an in-depth discussion and review of important empirical studies that highlight the effectiveness of read alouds, either carried out with parents and children or teachers and children, and
how this effectiveness has been debated. Following, I continue with a review of relevant empirical research that focuses more specifically on the instructional practices during read alouds in the school setting, between teachers and/or adults and students and their possible effects on literacy outcomes. Before ending this chapter, I look more closely at how read aloud instruction, and the utilization of children’s literature, is carried out in basal reading series, such as the series highlighted in the present study, *Voices Reading*, and are prominent in present day classroom settings throughout the United States.

Chapter Three describes the research design for this study, including the methodological decisions made in support of the research question. I begin the chapter with a brief overview of the present study, which is a single case study, as well as an introduction of the research question. The case study approach to qualitative research allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, or case, over a period of time, through detailed data collection involving multiple sources, leading to a description of the case through case-based themes (Creswell, 2006), with a focus on description and exploration. Reflective of this, the purpose of this study is to examine the literacy instruction of a first grade teacher’s utilization of a multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson, as it is supported by the *Voices Reading* curriculum, during a six-week summer academic program, using video-taped observations, semi-structured, open-ended interviews, collaborative interviews, as well as a detailed understanding of both the program literacy curriculum, as well as the program context. As such, the research is guided by the question of how this first grade teacher in a six-week academic program for students at risk for academic failure used the *Voices Reading* multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson to mediate students’ engagement with text. In order to look more
closely at what classroom practices support the teacher’s intentions to mediate this text engagement, as well as to better understand how she aims to make those practices reflective of the students and community she serves, I propose the following specific research question which will drive my data analysis, as well as results and conclusions: How does the teacher promote an APS during the read aloud lesson and how is this aspect of her teaching guided by the curriculum and program context? Subsequently, I continue the chapter by providing an in-depth description of the study setting, including the community where the research took place and the program used as the site of data collection. Following, I provide a detailed description of the Voices Reading curriculum, the reading literacy curriculum used during instruction at the program. I conclude Chapter Three with a description of the study participants, an overview of data collection and data sources, as well as a comprehensive overview of the proposed methods for data analysis, known as thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clark, 2006; O’Leary, 2009), a method of qualitative research analysis which allows for the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns, or themes in a set of data, in order to better understand and report on various aspects of the research topic. In this chapter, I also provide an in-depth description of how the characteristics of exemplary qualitative research, as presented in the literature, guided my data collection and decision for data analysis, and a discussion of important qualitative research terms central to the research process.

Chapter Four provides a description of the Findings from the study, based upon my analysis, and how these help answer the research question. Specifically, I address how the teacher mediates students’ engagement with text by creating an APS in the classroom through both the nature and content of her interactions that occur during
dialogue about the text reading, before, during and after the read aloud text, with both individual students and multiple students. Furthermore, I look more closely at the interactions that are most reflective of this APS, and what characterizes them. Within this chapter I also provide exemplars from the text which represent these interactions, and I look more closely at how the curriculum and program context supports the teacher during the process.

I end the dissertation with Chapter Five, which includes a discussion of the findings, in relation to the research question, and how the teacher supports an APS in the classroom to mediate students’ text engagement. I also address the limitations to the study and ideas for future research, as well as implications for professional development, specifically in terms of literacy instruction for teachers.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The Cognitive-Constructivist Orientation as a Lens for Viewing Reading and Reading Instruction

Prior to the 1970s, our view of reading and comprehension was driven by a fixed focus on the text as an object of study. According to this model, text understanding was viewed simply as an approximation of the text being read, and our standard of a mental model for understanding text reading was the actual text itself (Pearson, 1985), with little attention paid to the learner or learning context. Over the Past 40 years, however, a widely accepted, as well as a balanced and well-supported understanding of the reading process has emerged, through the development of research and practice. This approach is what Graves, Juel, and Graves (2006) describe as the cognitive-constructivist view of reading. This model of reading, which is based upon several influential movements, including constructivism, emphasizes that “reading is a process in which the reader actively searches for meaning in what she reads” (p. 2) and that reading is strongly based upon the reader’s prior knowledge, also referred to as schemata, and how he/she draws on this information for guidance in creating meaning surrounding the reading of text. Thus, the meaning that readers construct may vary, depending on their knowledge about the world, as well as its conventions. This cognitive-constructivist orientation to reading highlights ideas from cognitive psychology, which view the learner, and his/her background knowledge and thought processes, as central to reading. During the 1970s, studies by cognitive psychologists flooded the field of reading research in regards to the basic processes involved in reading (Pearson, 2002). The cognitive orientation highlighted the importance of how this knowledge was represented and organized in
students’ minds in using schematic structures (Graves et al., 2006). This emphasis on schema offered researchers and practitioners an account of everyday intuition, understanding that what we learn is new in relation to the knowledge that we already possess. It also provides insight into why individuals view events of learning in different ways, based upon their prior knowledge, and why learners, in some instances, simply don’t have enough background knowledge to understand a new experience or text (Pearson, 2002).

The cognitive-constructivist orientation to reading is also influenced by ideas surrounding reader-response, based upon the work of Rosenblatt (1985). Rosenblatt (1985) argued that “reading is a transaction, a two-way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances” (p. 268); reflective of this, the reader-response perspective places a great deal of emphasis on the reader as an individual in the reading process, and suggests that the meaning that a reader will gain from a text is based upon his/her transaction with that text, and thus will vary according to reader and different types of texts (Rosenblatt, as cited in Graves et al., 2006). Another highly influential aspect of the cognitive-constructivist view of reading is sociocultural theory. Based upon the work of Vygotsky (1978), sociocultural theory argues that learning is a social matter, as opposed to an individual matter, and that learning is viewed as an active and constructive task and what is learned is subjective, and based upon the individual experiences of the learners. While I discuss this theory a bit more in detail in later paragraphs, in relation to culturally responsive instruction, it is important to note, in terms of reading, that students’ social and cultural backgrounds have a significant effect on their learning, including the reading process, and that learning is an activity that takes
place in a social context (Graves et al., 2006). Finally, and most relevant to this review, is the influence of constructivism on the current cognitive-constructivist view of reading. Constructivism emphasizes the social nature of learning, and argues that learners should be given the opportunity to participate in contextually meaningful learning experiences, in which they are actively involved in their creating their own understanding and taking ownership for that understanding. Furthermore, constructivism highlights the idea that learning takes place among a community of interactive learners who engage in discourse, activity and reflection (Fosnot, & Perry, 2005b; Von Glaserfeld, 2005).

Constructivism

In relation to reading, constructivism emphasizes the idea that comprehending and understanding text is an active, constructive process, and that the meaning that is created from text reading is subjective and based upon each individual’s differing experience with varying texts. As such, each reader’s interpretation will vary, based upon prior experiences and prior knowledge (Graves et al., 2006). Beck and colleagues (1997) emphasize that text reading needs to involve learners’ attempts to act on information, rather than simply extract information, in order to construct meaning that leads to learning, and that teachers play an integral role in this process through their reading instruction (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Dreher, 2003). During the process, the reader must recognize new information presented in the text, while deciding how it relates to prior information. Furthermore, as the reading continues, the learner continues to form representations of his/her understanding of the text, which evolve and change as new information is encountered during reading, continually drawing upon connections between outside prior knowledge (Beck et al., 1997).
The way that we look at reading, utilizing a constructivist lens, has greatly influenced the way that we view reading instruction. From about 1910 to 1985, basal reading series, which I discuss later in this review, gained their prominence in the United States classrooms. These series consisted primarily of large collections of reading selections, worksheets, teacher’s manuals, and supplementary materials and activities. The reading selections read by children were characterized by a utilization of controlled vocabulary with very short narratives and heavy reliance on pictures and drawings to infer meaning from text. Much of the instruction surrounding basal reading series focused on direct, structured reading instruction, followed, often, by worksheet-based activities which emphasized the development of reading skills in isolation, such as decoding, vocabulary and comprehension. During this time period, controversy surrounding the best instructional approaches for teaching reading arose; while the alphabetic-spelling method of early years had disappeared from reading instruction, which emphasizes the teaching of the names of the alphabet letters, there was still a great emphasis on whole-word methods of teaching reading, which emphasizes students ability to learn to read entire words early on in their reading development, and various phonics approaches, which emphasize the instruction of the relationship between letters and their sounds during reading. This gave rise to concern surrounding basal reading series and how reading was taught (Blanton Smith, 2002; Graves et al., 2006). In the latter part of the 1980s and 1990s, critics began to claim that basal approaches to reading broke up language for students in an unnatural way that makes learning to read more difficult. Furthermore, they argued that too much emphasis was placed upon skill learning in isolation, that vocabulary used in the readers was too controlled, and furthermore, that
teachers had to be too scripted in their instruction. They also argued that there was not an emphasis on using real, authentic children’s literature as a part of reading instruction (Graves et al., 2006). However, with the advent of the whole language movement and literature-based reading approaches during this time period, which placed a greater emphasis on the construction of personal meaning through text reading (Boran & Comber, 2001) and the wholeness of words, sentences and paragraphs (Krashen, 2002), as opposed to the instruction of isolated reading skills, constructivism has experienced a resurgence of popularity in recent years (Martinez, Saulea, & Huber, 2001). Reading instruction, based upon constructivist ideas, suggests “that readers play a much more active-constructive role in their own comprehension than our earlier passive-receptive views dictated” (Pearson, 1985, p. 102). As such, the teacher no longer relies on the text as the sole source of meaning and comprehension for their students during reading instruction; now, the he/she must look more closely at all facets associated with a students’ reading of text, including the text itself, learners’ prior knowledge and implementation of strategies during reading, as well as the classroom situation (Pearson, 1985). In addition, authentic children’s literature, written by professional authors with the intention of providing excellent reading experiences for children, are to be a key aspect of reading instruction. Furthermore, priority is placed upon the importance of understanding and comprehension as a part of reading instruction, and the integration of reading with other aspects of the language arts curriculum in a holistic fashion. Finally, a great emphasis is placed on child-centered learning, recognizing children as the main focus of reading instruction, assuming that instruction comes as needed and is tailored to learners’ needs, as they are engaged in the reading process (Graves et al., 2006). All of
these aspects of reading instruction, reflective of a constructivist viewpoint, have evolved in more recent years, particularly with the advent of a balanced literacy approach, following the publication of the National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) in 2000, which highlights the importance a balanced approach to reading instruction, emphasizing both phonics instruction in addition to a holistic, meaning-based approach to the reading process, as well as the recent high-stakes standardized testing movement. However, these constructivist characteristics described in detail in this section still have significant influence over how we view the reading process, from a theoretical viewpoint, and what teachers are asked to include and emphasize as part of their reading instruction.

**Situated Cognition**

The theoretical framework of situated cognition also supports the way in which we view the reading process and reading instruction. This framework reinforces the idea that learning can be analyzed in terms of internal mental processes of learning, reflective of traditionalist cognitive science; however, it also acknowledges that knowledge and learning are distributed across people and artifacts, with a focus on understanding the learning activity and how it is influenced by the social environment and context in which it is situated. As a result, the situative approach shifts the focus from cognition as an internal mental process of an individual, to a focus on situated action within activity systems as central, with the individuals and their interrelations acting as key components (Sawyer & Greeno, 2009; Kirshner & Whitson, 1997b). As such, learning can be seen as always being socially and situationally contingent (St. Julien, 1997), and dependent upon the participation and activity of other people, tools, symbols, processes, or things.
As such, situated cognition supports the idea that all literacies, including reading, are situated, and that all utilizations of written language can be viewed as taking place in a particular time or context. Furthermore, all literate activity reflects broader social practices which reach beyond the individual (Barton, Hamilton, and Roz Invancic, 2000). Kintsch’s (2009) situation model of reading represents these ideas and argues that constructing a representation of the text during reading going beyond the written word of the text itself, or rather a textbase understanding, and focuses, instead on the reader’s background knowledge, personal experiences, and goals or purposes for reading, which will vary. Thus, an important component of the situation model is how students perceive their learning environment, which is created by the teacher during instruction (Kintsch, 2009). Reflective of this, we are reminded that the most powerful learning takes place in the real world and that educators can support student learning best when they situate learning tasks as a part of instruction in authentic contexts (Truscott & Truscott, 2004). It is important to add, when looking at our current view of reading instruction, especially in light of this discussion of cognition, that research on motivation and reading also suggests that students’ comprehension is positively affected when they are able to actively engage with print, relating ideas encountered to personal knowledge and experiences (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; RAND Reading Study Group & Snow, 2002), a process which often depends on the instructional programs that are used (Wigfield et al., 2004). This motivation is reflected both in learners’ attitudes towards reading, or how they generally feel about reading, as well as their general interest in reading, and how this affects their comprehension (Wigfield, 1997). Students need to be given opportunities to experience
contexts that promote enthusiasm in learning to read and write, in addition to learning through reading and writing (Snow et al., 1998).

Reflective of these two very important theoretical frameworks, reading aloud as an instructional activity affords teachers the opportunity to utilize rich literature, with themes that are reflective of students’ diverse backgrounds and prior knowledge, which serve as sources of rich sources of information, to motivate learners to participate in complex, interactive dialogue and discussions surrounding text reading. Constructivism supports the notion that these discussions provide opportunities for children to be active participants in the creation of meaning and understanding surrounding text, relying on their ability to integrate both their prior experiences, which are important foundations of knowledge, with new ideas encountered in books that they read. In turn, this process facilitates students’ development of critical literacy skills, including comprehension, vocabulary, and oral language. It is also critical to highlight that during reading instruction, and read aloud instruction in particular, the participatory structure must be active, reflective of constructivist ideas (Beck et al., 1997), where children encouraged to pose their own questions and arguments, as well as to respond their fellow classmates’ and teacher’s questions and arguments (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Dickinson and Smith (1994) and Teale and Martinez (1996) also add that the most effective read aloud features includes a focus on a discussion of critical story ideas, as well as involving children in discussion about text which allow them to be reflective. Furthermore, situated cognition argues that these read aloud sessions are socially situated, and thus should reflect the environment and community of learners where they take place. Creating a representation of texts, reflected in students’ understanding, goes beyond the
text itself and is reflective, also, of the learner, as well as his/her community, and their goals for reading. It is only through this process that meaning surrounding the text can be created. Furthermore, during the read aloud activity, the teacher, using tools of learning, such as a reading curriculum and the literature it offers, which allows learners the opportunity to reflect, express, and connect literacy experiences to their own personal lives and the real world in a meaningful way (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a). It is also important to highlight that the most compelling purposes for motivating children to read, reflective of theories of motivation, are those experiences that they encounter in their social relationships, as they engage in the world around them (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991; Turner, 1995; Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2004). By providing reading content during instruction that is centered around major themes and issues, students are provided the opportunity to examine important, critical topics, which are of interest to them, from multiple perspective, and thus immerse themselves in instruction driven by inquiry and motivation for learning (Minnick Santa, 1997).

**Culturally Responsive Instruction**

The framework of culturally responsive teaching, which also emanates from the work of Vygotsky regarding sociocultural theory (1962; 1987), complements these ideas surrounding constructivism and situated cognition, in terms of reading instruction, and brings in an important focus on the instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. In his work on the sociocultural theory of human learning, Vygotsky asserted that culture is a major determinant of the development of an individual. Within this theoretical framework, he theorized that children construct knowledge, and that this knowledge is always socially mediated, influenced by an individual’s interactions; thus
the development resulting from knowledge construction can never be separated from its social context. He also believed that although two different processes, learning and development are closely interrelated, and can impact one another. As such, he stressed the importance of considering a child’s developmental level in conjunction with the information at that level that will aid in a child’s development. However, he also noted that if we only take into account that developmental level, we risk reducing teaching to presenting information that a child already knows, or is too difficult for a child to learn, and thus miss the opportunity to capture those ideal “teachable moments” (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Furthermore, Vygotsky believed that language has a critical and purposeful role in learning and development for individuals, such that it is the primary instrument that learners use to symbolize their unique experiences and thoughts and to communicate these with one another (Vygotsky, 1962, 1987). Language, he argued, plays an integral role in cognition and can be thought of as a mental tool which allows individuals to think in a more abstract and flexible manner. Language gives children the ability to imagine and develop new ideas, and to then to share those ideas with those around them, without necessarily having the immediate stimuli present (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Vygotsky also argued that self-directed behavior manifested in language was a form of private speech which students use to develop their own behavior, as well as cognitive development. Generally, this language results from children’s interactions with their families and communities in a contextualized environment. Students use these interactions with language to guide and direct their own behavior and cognitive development. When the language of classroom instruction is reflected in contexts that are familiar to students and within learners’ zone of proximal development, the information
that students receive becomes comprehensible, which eventually leads to more robust learning (Vygotsky, 1962, 1987; Moll & Whitmore, 1993; Moll & Greenberg, 1990). It is the role of the classroom teacher to provide this type of context through his/her instructional strategies.

Based upon this premise, the framework of culturally responsive teaching, which approaches learning from an additive perspective, recognizes that the background knowledge and unique experiences that each student brings to the classroom, reflected in his/her culture, is something to be valued and built upon, rather than overlooked and disregarded, and that through this type of approach to learning we can create an educational system that is representative and worthy of the diversity of its learners (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). More specifically, culturally responsive teaching practices can be defined as practices employed during classroom instruction that are “grounded in an understanding of the role of culture in the teaching and learning process” (Adams, Bondy, & Kuhel, 2005, p. 50). This type of teaching, as described by Ladson-Billings (1994), is a pedagogy that “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 18). Language, particularly classroom discourse, plays an important role in this process (Michaels, 1981). It is the language and culture that children bring to school that should be the foundation of instruction in reading and writing. Once in school, contexts of learning should be modified to create success for all learners (Heath, 1983). If given this opportunity, students will have the opportunity to become actively engaged in the instructional process through meaningful dialogue between teachers and fellow students, utilizing both oral and written domains (Leinhardt, 1992). As such, culturally
responsive teaching celebrates the diversity of students and provides a means for them to make deeply personal connections to text during reading instruction, reflective of this diversity. Utilizing this theoretical framework, teachers can use read aloud instruction as a vehicle for learning to help students’ make sense of their everyday lives, through text reading. During this process, teachers can engage students’ in thought-provoking and meaningful discussions which encourage students to move from literal to interpretative responses surrounding the texts they read (Conrad, Gong, Sipp, & Wright, 2004), reflective of their personal perspectives and thinking, which is representative of the diversity of their backgrounds.

**Definition of Meaning in Relation to Reading Instruction**

For the purposes of this literature review, as well as the present study, which is focused on reading instruction, specifically read aloud instruction, I define meaning using a constructivist perspective. Reading, in its simplest form, can be defined as the process of constructing meaning, as opposed to simply extracting information from text (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2006; RAND Reading Study Group & Snow, 2002); in short, learners must act upon information in order for meaning to be created and learning to ensue. A reader’s efforts to engage actively with the information that they read in texts in order to derive sense from it and create meaning around it is central to comprehension. Therefore, constructing meaning during reading should be viewed not as the process of passively extracting information from text, but rather an active building of understanding which encompasses the determination of what this information means. This requires that the reader be able to explain information presented in a text, connect it to previous knowledge, and then utilize this new information in novel ways (Beck et al., 1997). That
said, the meaning created is open and constantly changing, although it is grounded in the text being read. As such, meaning construction during reading might be described more aptly as a cyclical and evolutionary process of forming hypotheses, and then testing these hypotheses, to support an interpretation and understanding of text on the part of the reader (Ruddell & Unrau, 1997). Furthermore, reflective of situated cognition, the meaning created as a part of reading instruction must reflect students’ backgrounds and goals for this activity, and are valued because these important aspects can shape the outcome of the activity (Behrman, 2002). In other words, reading and writing and the meaning created as part of these acts of literacy will only make sense to our students during instruction when we view them as they are situated within a greater context of social and cultural practices (Gee, 2000). In conjunction with these ideas surrounding cognition, we must be cognizant of the fact that there is a clear meaning-negotiation process that is critical to focusing students’ intentions and motivation, as well as engaging them in active learning, as they read texts. Ruddell and Unrau (1997, p. 105) describe this idea of meaning negotiation, reflective of theories of motivation, when they explain that “if the reader’s focus of intention and motivation is to be developed, classroom negotiation of meaning is imperative”, and that the teacher, through instruction, can provide activities that enable readers to shape and share this meaning with their peers. In addition, the instructional practices that teachers employ during read aloud instruction, according to the sociocultural theory framework, should be thought of as tools of mediation. Mediation is defined as the use of particular signs or symbols in mental processing which involves using something else to represent behavior or objects that exist within the environment. A mediator assists in a child’s development by making
it much easier for a child to carry out a particular task or behavior (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Finally, reflective of culturally responsive instruction, it is important to remember that this meaning is reflective of students’ home lives, and connected in significant ways to their academic lives, emphasizing and acknowledging their diverse backgrounds, knowledge and prior experiences as key aspects of understanding and learning (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

**Read Aloud Instruction: A Review of the Literature**

While we have extensive knowledge on the oral language abilities of young children and we know that they arrive at school with a strong command of their native language, or dialect, reflective in their ability to use complex sentences and vocabulary (Gambrell, 2004), we also know, however, that the oral speech of the home, which is characterized by contextualized language, has distinct differences from the decontextualized language of the classroom. This decontextualized language encountered in the school setting is much tougher to master than contextualized language, because the child has to learn new information, generally without a supporting context. This is of particular importance, taking into account that children who come from backgrounds affected by poverty often enter schools with limited exposure to books and fewer experiences with the formal literacy and language skills of the classroom which are often attributed to academic success (Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998). Even more concerning is the fact that many children from diverse backgrounds come to school and experience a mismatch between discourse styles of the home and school environments and may experience greater difficulties acquiring this new type of language as a result. The challenge may be confounded for those students whose native language, or dialect, is
different than the standard English used and valued in most schools in the United States (Cazden, 1998; Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2002; Lazar, 2011). Lazar (2011) points out that literacy achievement is more likely to take place when the language and literacy practices of home and school are aligned, in classrooms where teachers attempt to provide students the opportunities to utilize language and print across multiple contexts, in order to bridge any gaps between home and school discourses.

In order to achieve high literacy proficiency, students need to learn how to think both analytically and critically when engaging in this discourse of the classroom, which is part of instruction. Successful teachers are those that aim to implement a comprehensive range of teaching and learning strategies in their classrooms which enable this type of engagement amongst all learners, including those in urban, multicultural and multilingual settings (Sharma, 2005). As such, there is much interest in the read aloud practices of classroom teachers (Edwards Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008; Van Kleeck & Stahl, 2003) because of their enormous benefits to literacy learning (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; McCormick, 1977; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Trelease, 2001). Research reveals that effective read alouds serve as an important aspect of reading instruction for young, emergent readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Edwards Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008; Fisher et al., 2004; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004), providing an ideal learning opportunity for students to explore with language and literacy (Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998). In Becoming a Nation of Readers, a major literacy policy document created by the National Academy of Education’s Commission on Reading, the National Institute of Education, and the Center for the Study of Reading in 1985, it was concluded that “the single most important activity for building
the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is read aloud to children” (p. 23). Since the late 1980s, following the publication of this document, a great deal of research and developmental activity has been conducted that focuses on reading aloud for instructional purposes. Emanating from this research is the important notion that read alouds not only rate high as an instructional activity among early childhood classroom teachers, but additionally that teachers believe that reading aloud to young learners is a powerful tool (Teale, 2003). As recently as 2009, in fact, the power of the read aloud, sometimes termed a shared reading, storybook reading, or shared storybook reading, which might encompass a parent reading to a young child or a teacher reading a book to a small group of students or a whole class of students, has continued to be touted as “the single most important thing adults can do to promote the emergent literacy skills of young children” (National Early Literacy Panel, 2009).

Most importantly, the read aloud activity provides children the experience to construct meaning from decontextualized language, which is central to the development of literacy skills (Beck & McKeown, 2001). Through the implementation of this activity as a part of classroom instruction, students are provided with models of fluent reading, as well as the opportunity to promote their text comprehension skills (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Walker-Dalhouse, Hanson Sibley, Dalhouse, Nagwabi, & Selzer, 2011; Edwards Santoro et al., 2008), vocabulary development (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Edwards Santoro et al., 2008), and oral language skills (Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Wasik & Bond, 2001). In booksharing, characterized by read alouds, children begin to become cognizant of the linguistic and visual features of texts. However, they do this with wholeness behind the stories understood in their own way, and used to create meaning in
their own way (Clay, 2001). Read aloud time during classroom instruction has been shown to be an opportune time to build the comprehension skills of students, by incorporating the use of oral language activities, listening activities, as well as discussion that revolves around the text, allowing students to become proficient readers and thinkers (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). In fact, Snow and colleagues (1998) argue that many of the outcomes gained through reading aloud children in Kindergarten are significantly associated with reading achievement in the following grade levels as children enter first through third grade. However, it is important to remember that very specific instructional practices might be integrated during read aloud instruction, which strengthen students’ ability to creating meaning from reading, and thus further strengthen their comprehension abilities (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008). It is also critical to note that these practices, based on the work of Vygotsky (1962; 1987), are situated within a sociocultural context (Dooley, 2010) which is reflective of the individual experiences of each learner.

It is also important to highlight that the reading of books of out loud is not adequate in itself to accelerate children’s development of literacy skills, including oral language development and listening comprehension. The way in which books are shared is integral to the process (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993), and further research which provides additional insight into this process and the practices it entails and how they vary by teacher is warranted (Sipe, 2000). Beck and McKeown (2001), based upon their extensive research of text reading, argue that exemplary read aloud instruction includes several characteristics. First of all, teachers are encouraged to understand the differences between constructing meaning during reading as opposed to retrieving information from reading. In addition, they need to conceptualize the idea that children’s ability to gain
meaning through decontextualized language is a challenging and complex task, and not easily mastered; however, by designing questions integrated during and after reading that encourage children to talk about the text and build and connect ideas, they provide learners the opportunity to engage in this type of language development. Furthermore, the authors highlight that while students’ reliance on their background knowledge is important to their text reading, teachers need to become skilled at meaningfully incorporating this knowledge to aid, rather than hinder, text understanding, during read aloud instruction. They also add that teachers’ ability to understand that the use of pictures during read alouds can either enhance, or hinder the processing of linguistic context in a text, thus the timing of the integration of these pictures is important. Finally, they add that teachers’ skill at capturing the importance of sophisticated words encountered in read aloud trade books by using them during explicit vocabulary activities which support their utilization is also key to students’ comprehension, vocabulary, and oral language development during read alouds (Beck & McKeown, 2001). Hoffman and colleagues (1993), in their description of a model read aloud, also encourage instructors to designate both a legitimate time and place in the daily curriculum for the read aloud lesson. In addition, they stress the importance of engaging students in the reading of high-quality literature, which have enduring themes, meaty plots, and rich language, and to encourage their students to take part in discussions which are lively, welcoming, and thought-provoking. While read alouds can be conducted in whole class settings, the authors encourage the opportunity to carry them out in different types of grouping, to allow maximum opportunity for representative participation. Finally, they also encourage the opportunity for students to have a variety of response and extension
opportunities related to the read aloud lesson. They also suggest the opportunity for students to participate in multiple readings of the text, allowing students’ to more deeply understand and respond to what they are reading over time. McGee and Schickedanz (2007) support this idea of multiple readings, encouraging an evolution, over several engagements with the text, between the teacher and the students, where children begin to take an even more active role in the lesson, as they actively reconstruct the story with guidance and support from the teacher. Barrentine (1996) adds that the conversation during read alouds must be what she describes as interactive, and ongoing, conducted throughout the reading of the text, so that instruction and conversation are continuously intertwined. During these interactions, it is critical that teachers balance discussion and text reading, as well as allow for modeling of strategy instruction. As such, the lessons should be well-planned, and based upon literature that incorporate rich language, complex plots, multiple and varying characters, and multiple layers of meaning. Prior to the lesson, the teacher must think critically about what the goals for the lesson might be, and anticipate what types of questions and comments the students will make, which requires prior study of the text on the part of the instructor. Furthermore, the teacher must be open and responsive to children’s dialogue as it develops, as well as provide opportunities for follow-up activities which extend children’s understanding and literacy development.

**Read alouds as an effective literacy tool.** Despite the overwhelming support of read aloud instruction and its importance as an instructional activity, the effectiveness of this literacy tool, based upon results from empirical research, has been debated. In 1994, Scarborough and Dobrich conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of 31 empirical research
samples from studies conducted between 1960 and 1993 on the hypothesized influence of parent-preschool read aloud experiences on the development of reading skills. While their analysis focused only on those studies dealing with parent-child interactions surrounding book readings, the research is pertinent to this study because of its findings. Their analysis revealed there was not as much research published on the subject of read alouds as they might have anticipated, despite the overwhelming support of this literacy tool. Secondly, the variability of correlational results from sample to sample was great, even despite the similarity in outcomes that were measured. Also, the average magnitude of correlations within the study were not as strong as the researchers anticipated. In addition, the correlational results revealed little support for the argument that the quality, versus the quantity, of shared book reading was more strongly related to language or literacy development, although they attributed these findings to the possible lack of research in this area as well as the selection of inappropriate qualitative measures. Finally, the authors found that there was success in intervention programs that had altered the frequency and/or quality of parent and preschool reading, although they anticipated even larger effects. In summary, Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) concluded that if we continue to highlight reading aloud to children as an extremely important and beneficial academic activity for children, tied to their literacy success, more research should be conducted which focuses on aspects of this instructional activity that are most beneficial. However, as argued by Teale (2003), this research only considered quantitative studies, ignoring many descriptive research studies available at that particular time. Teale also questioned Scarborough and Dobrich’s methodology, based on their findings, and called into question the study’s effect sizes and samples. Although the study does not offer a full picture in relation to storybook
reading interactions between parents and children, it nevertheless, argued Teale (2003), is instructive findings.

Meyer, Wardrop, Hastings, and Linn (1994) also conducted study of read alouds, using naturalistic observations, which echoed the findings of Scarborough and Dolbrich (1994). Unlike the research of their predecessors, this study dealt with read alouds in the school setting. It also included an analysis which focused on parents’ interactions with these same students in relation to text reading. Using quantitative research methods, specifically correlation analysis, the results from Meyer and colleagues’ (1994) longitudinal study revealed that the amount of time that first grade teachers spent reading out loud to their students was unrelated to their reading achievement, with teachers who read the most spending the least amount of time on activities with a positive correlation to reading achievement. Further analysis resulting from the use of parent questionnaires provided results that sequentially highlighted that although there was a positive relationship between students’ engagement with print and their reading achievement, there was not a positive relationship between the amount of time parents spent reading with their children and their reading achievement. Finally, further analysis in this study revealed that there was no relationship between Kindergarten teachers’ reading and these students later performance as they completed first grade.

Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pelligrini (1995), however, followed these seminal research studies with a quantitative meta-analysis on parent-child storybook readings that contradicted the findings of Meyer et al. (1994) and Scarborough and Dobrich (1994). As with their predecessors, Scarborough and Dobrich (1994), they included studies in their research that focused only on parent-child interactions surrounding book reading.
research, which focused only on the quantity and frequency of these readings and their
effects on outcome measures, including oral language, emergent literacy skills, and reading
achievement, included an analysis of 29 studies. Based upon their analysis, the authors
recognized a medium to strong effect size, concluding that parent-preschooler reading is
related to the aforementioned measures, and that book reading explains about 8% of the
variance in outcome related to these measures. In particular, the researchers found
storybook reading to be particularly influential on the acquisition written language among
learners.

Whitehurst and colleagues (1988) work, although taking place a decade earlier,
echoes the findings of Bus and colleagues (1995), and the positive relationship between
storybook reading and literacy outcomes. They conducted a study that demonstrated the
power of what was described as shared storybook reading, or dialogic reading, in the
development of children’s language skills. Whitehurst and his colleagues continued to
demonstrate the power of dialogic reading in a series of subsequent, instrumental
research (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994; Payne et al., 1994; Valdez-
Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Whitehurst, Arnold, et al., 1994; Whitehurst. Epstein, et
al., 1994; Whitehurst et al., 1988). Dialogic reading is an interactive way of engaging in
read alouds with young children that integrates strategic questioning and responding to
children during text reading. In dialogic reading a shift in roles takes place between the
adult, either a parent or teacher, and children, over time. As a result of this shift, learners
are encouraged to become actively involved in the reading process. In this first study,
Whitehurst and colleagues (1988) integrated a one-month, home-based intervention
program, in order to optimize parental reading of picture books with young children.
Based upon audiotaped reading sessions, quantitative analysis utilizing t-tests demonstrated that children in the experimental group had a higher mean length of utterance (MLU), a higher frequency of phrases, and lower frequency of single words during the recorded reading sessions. In addition, using additional quantitative analysis involving t-tests based upon children’s post testing scores, children in the experimental group scored significantly higher than those in the control group. These results, although statistically diminished, remained the consistent following the nine-month assessment. As such, the power of the read aloud and its ability to positively affect children’s literacy outcomes, was once again highlighted. However, it is important to remember that dialogic reading, discussed in subsequent paragraphs, involves very specific practices that promote interactive text engagement which are unique and might promote more positive literacy outcomes in comparison to other read aloud instructional techniques commonly seen in classroom settings.

Furthermore, the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2009) conducted a meta-analysis of randomized control trials and quasi-experimental intervention studies that focused primarily or entirely on shared reading, which also found more positive findings. In their study, they examined shared reading interventions conducted either by teachers, parents, or a combination of both, individually or in groups, conducted with many variations on these procedures. Children in the majority of the studies were exposed to a short-term shared reading intervention, lasting one to six months, that was either reflective of a substantial increase in frequency of shared reading activities or a change in the way that the activities were carried out. Unlike the meta-analyses of their predecessors, specifically Scarborough and Dobrich (1994), and Bus et al. (1995), NELP
only included studies that had undergone some scientific review, included studies of preschool and Kindergarten children, and included studies that also evaluated the effects of shared-reading interventions. In addition, they reviewed studies that were not also available at the time of implementation of prior analyses. Results from this meta-analysis revealed that indicated these interventions yielded moderate effects on oral language skills and print knowledge. More specifically, it revealed positive, substantial, and significant effects of these interventions on children’s oral language skills and print knowledge. Based upon available studies included in the analysis, it was concluded that shared-reading interventions are effective younger and older children, and both for at risk readers, as well as for learners who were not at-risk, although specific literacy outcomes for at-risk populations were not analyzed (Swanson et al., 2011).

Finally, and most recently, Swanson and colleagues (2011) add to these positive findings surrounding instructional read alouds, as they followed this work with a synthesis and meta-analysis of the extant research on the effects of storybook read-aloud interventions specifically for children at risk for reading difficulties ages 3 to 8 is provided. Unlike previous reviews, Swanson and colleagues (2011) only focused on teacher-delivered interventions, and they limited their research to studies that focused on children who were at risk for reading difficulty. In addition, the research is reflective of all reading and language outcomes, as opposed to limited interventions or outcomes. Results from their analysis revealed significant, positive effects on several aspects of students’ literacy outcomes, including language, phonological awareness, concepts about print, comprehension, and vocabulary. Although the effect on language outcomes was smaller and variance was not accounted for by intervention type, all other mean effects
were large with intervention type explaining some of the variance in outcome results. Read-aloud instruction, noted the authors, has been studied in several instructional formats for storybook read-aloud interventions. That said, dialogic reading had the most evidence in the study to support its effects on children’s literacy outcomes, with eight experimental studies analyzed which address this format, revealing large to mean effect sizes for these interventions on the aforementioned child literacy outcomes. The meta-analysis also showed that computer-assisted interventions during storybook read-aloud instruction demonstrated small to large mean effects on literacy outcomes, while limited questioning interventions revealed a small, negative mean effect size on phonological awareness but a large effect size related to vocabulary outcomes. Computer-assisted interventions, the authors specify, also demonstrated significantly higher effects on reading comprehension outcomes, as well as vocabulary outcomes, than dialogic reading interventions.

**Instructional practices during read alouds.** I began this section of my literature review with a discussion of these important empirical studies to highlight how the effectiveness of read alouds, either carried out with parents and children or teachers and children, continues to be debated. However, I continue with a review of relevant empirical research that focuses more specifically on the instructional practices during read alouds in the school setting, between teachers and/or adults and students and their possible effects on literacy outcomes, as studies are more limited which actually focus on how to conduct effective read alouds (Fisher et al., 2004; Flood 1977), and the specifics on read aloud practices are less explicit (Fisher et al., 2004; Hoffman, Roser & Battle, 1993). What should be going on during read aloud instruction, as Hoffman et al. (1993)
points out, is easier described than done. Simply reading aloud to children, without planning or purpose, will not conquer the challenge of literacy teaching. “Commitment to a quality read-aloud experience, well-conceived and well constructed, is needed before the maximum effects in language, literacy and literature growth can be realized” (Hoffman et al., 1993, p. 502), because the manner in which books are shared during classroom instruction with readers is important (McGee& Schickendanz, 2007).

Furthermore, read aloud practices which have been shown to be clearly effective, are not often the most consistent ones in classrooms (Beck & McKeown, 2001). In their publication Reading Aloud in classrooms: From the Modal toward a “Model”, Hoffman et al. (1993) argue that teachers often meet a variety of challenges when trying to implement a well-constructed read aloud experience which benefits children’s literacy experiences and development. First of all, read alouds often require more time than teachers report to have or able to spend with this important activity, requiring them to sacrifice their implementation of other literacy activities which they deem crucial in their teaching. In addition, they are challenged by resources, and having access to rich literature or reading literacy units that incorporate read aloud texts that encourage interaction, discussion and dialogue. Finally, teachers often lack the opportunity to participate in trainings and professional developments that instruct them in how to incorporate highly effective read aloud lessons into their classroom instruction (Hoffman et al., 1993).

Although there are fewer empirical studies which address classroom read aloud practices, as Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) and Bus and colleagues (1995) explicitly reference in their meta-analyses, there is research that attempts to address this paucity in
the literature. The studies chosen for this review, which are quantitative and qualitative in nature, focus on the read aloud as a shared reading activity, and involve adults reading with children, either in a small group or whole group classroom setting. Because of the large breadth of literature available on read alouds in general, rather than to simply conduct an exhaustive review of all studies, I have chosen to focus on the best available research evidence pertaining to this topic, as well as a key number of conceptual pieces, as encouraged by Boote & Beile (2005), and to focus specifically on classroom read aloud practices. Randolph (2009), based upon the work of Cooper (1988), refers to this as a purposive sample. The active and interactive nature of text reading, based upon constructivist ideas, highlighted by Beck and colleagues (1997) and discussed in prior research conducted by Whitehurst and colleagues (1988), are highlighted in some studies, and as such, emphasized in this review, because of the importance of this theoretical framework to my research. In addition, some of the studies chosen for this review highlight outcome measures related to text interaction and literacy skill development, specifically oral language, vocabulary and comprehension, and how practices employed by teachers affected these outcomes; however, others simply focus on the practices of teachers as they aimed to reach those outcomes. To identify relevant studies, descriptors such as read aloud, storybook reading, and instruction were used to search Education Full Text (EBSCO), including ERIC and PsychINFO research databases. Over 150 abstracts from peer-reviewed journals were evaluated for inclusion in this literature review. In addition, key references from publications utilized as part of this search were examined and analyzed for inclusion. All of the studies included in the review are empirical in nature except for one. This
study is included because of the significance of its findings, and because of the contributions its authors have made to research regarding text reading.

Reflective of this, I discuss, first, the influential work of Dickinson and Smith (1994), Martinez and Teale (1993) and Teale and Martinez (1996), as well as Hoffman and colleagues (1993), which focuses on the instructional practices of teachers during shared book reading. Dickinson and Smith (1994), as well as Martinez and Teale (1993) and Teale and Martinez (1996), look at teacher’s instructional practices, as well as the outcome of these instructional practices on students’ literacy development, during text readings. However, Hoffman and colleagues (1993) work focus solely on teachers’ practices. I then turn to the important work of researchers Beck and McKeown (1997), as well as Beck and colleagues (1996), and Sandora, Beck, and McKeown (1999), regarding how teachers’ read aloud practices can support active text engagement, as well as Klesius and Griffith (1996) and Wiseman (2010) on interactive text reading during read aloud instruction. Finally, I end with the significant research of Fisher and colleagues (2004) on common implementation practices of teachers during read alouds.

In their extensive study on teacher practices during book reading in preschool classrooms, Dickinson and Smith (1994) were interested in identifying patterns of teacher-child interactions, and if these affect children’s language and literacy development, based upon data gathered for a longitudinal study of the home and school experience that support the language and literacy development of 84 children from low-income, English-speaking homes. 12 of the subjects in the study participated in Head Start programs, and 13 were in similar subsidized programs for children from low income families. 62% of the participants were White, 34% African American, and 4% Hispanic;
60% were boys. The researchers created verbatim transcripts of 25 videotaped 25 classroom book-reading sessions of varying books, dividing the transcripts into before book-reading talk, during book-reading talk, and after book-reading talk. Quantitative analysis, augmented by qualitative observations, was used to determine the interactional patterns to describe the book-reading sessions. The authors found, first, that there were three sets of relationships that existed between the variables: (a) Teacher and children distributed their talk surrounding text reading in similar ways, with the amount of total talk before and after book reading, as well as during, correlated between teachers and children; (b) in classrooms where more talk was present, the talk tended to be more cognitively challenging; and (c) in classrooms where there was more total talk overall, the talk by teachers and children tended to be more managerial. In addition, to determine whether there were constellations of individual variables that could describe similarities within groups and differences across groups of classrooms, the researchers engaged in a multistep analysis, including cluster analysis, ANOVA methods, and canonical discriminant analysis, which revealed three distinct groupings of classrooms, as well as significant differences across the three groups. Based upon these results, they identified three distinct approaches to book reading which occurred within and across the 25 classrooms, which were co-constructive, didactic-interactional, and performance oriented. The researchers’ findings showed that five of the book-readings observed were co-constructive. Co-constructive book-reading is characterized by high amounts of talk by the children and teacher during book reading, as well as talk that is analytic in nature, and prompted by the teacher and responded to by the teacher and students, and talk that is characterized by extensive clarification. There is also little talk before or after the
reading of the text. Ten classrooms were described as being didactic-interactional. Didactic-interactional book reading was characterized by limited amounts of talk taking place as the book was read and before and after it was read, also. Most of the talk involved in the interactions dealt with immediate recall and task organization, which includes chiming a familiar phrase from the text or answering simple recall questions, and utilizing gestures and a specific questioning intonation. These strategies were often aimed at classroom management or involving disruptive children. Another pattern of interaction for this group of book readings was called the "basal reader" technique, in which the teacher reading in this manner completed a section of the text and then engaged the children in simple recall and comprehension questions. This approach is commonly found in many elementary classrooms. There is also a high level of teacher control, as well as child involvement, in didactic interactional. Finally, ten classrooms in the study were also described as being performance-oriented. In these classrooms, talk surrounding the text reading takes place mostly before or after story reading, with the majority of the talk taking place after. If talk did take place during reading, it was mostly analytic in nature. In addition, the researchers found that extensive book introductions, as well as discussions which encouraged predictions and personal connections, as well as vocabulary analysis, tended to take place in these classrooms. Most of the follow-up talk surrounding the text was related to a reconstruction of the story, which was linked to children’s personal experiences, or to reinforce story recall and comprehension. The teachers in this group also used these follow-up discussions to elicit children’s reactions to the stories, as well their experiences. Finally, using regression analysis, the authors were able to determine the association between child-involved analytical talk and
vocabulary development, based on the children’s Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-R) scores. As such, they found that variation in how teachers discussed books with children was strongly related to children’s long-term vocabulary growth and development and story comprehension, with the performance-oriented approach having the most positive relationship. In summary, the researchers discovered that a focus on child-involved analytic talk during conversations surrounding book reading seemed to a clearly important factor in children’s vocabulary growth and understanding. In addition, they found that discussions that included this type of analytical talk do not have to be lengthy, but when they take place in follow-up discussions they tend to be most beneficial. Finally, the researchers found that vocabulary development in classrooms, characterized by the didactic-interactional approach, was lower, exemplifying the idea that the utilization of books that are typically characterized by predictable text and vocabulary are not the most beneficial to student literacy development. This study, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, reveals the complex nature of storybook reading in classrooms, as well as the patterns of teacher-child interactions involved, particularly with younger preschool children, and how these affect student literacy outcomes, specifically vocabulary development. The work is highly influential, and a seminal study which sets the stage for discussion surrounding read aloud instruction practices.

Martinez and Teale’s (1993) study also looked at shared storybook reading, through the interactions of the teacher and students surrounding both the content and structure of the story, and literature used during the reading. More specifically the authors emphasized six teachers’ reading styles, and the story comprehension of their students. The study took place in six Kindergarten classrooms in a suburban metropolitan area.
community in the southwest. Student participants were 75% White, 20% Mexican-American, and the remaining were African American or from other ethnic/cultural backgrounds. The teachers had previously worked closely with the researchers prior to the implementation of the study in developing emergent literacy programs and practices; thus, they were described as “very good” teachers. Observations and recordings of the teachers were conducted as they implemented read alouds of four high quality books of children’s literature that could be analyzed by a story grammar, with the same pieces being read in each classroom. Story grammars are comprehension tools that can be used to increase students’ skills in describing, discussing and analyzing text, with attention to parts of the story including settings, themes, plots, and resolutions. The observations were followed up with interviews of the teachers, which addressed why they carried out read aloud instruction. In addition, researchers conducted a comprehension measure based upon the story grammar for a smaller sub-group of participating students in each class, at varying ability levels, which addressed retelling, assisted retelling, and cued recall questions. The data emanating from the research was classified according to the level of topic units (TU), which include all contiguous talk coming from the teacher and students surrounding the same aspect of a story feature or story-related feature. TUs were categorized according to facets of style including focus (i.e., focus of teacher talk during text reading), type of information (i.e., what the teacher chose to talk about or encouraged the students to talk about during text reading), and instructional strategies (i.e., strategies that teacher utilized during text reading). Preliminary quantitative analysis based upon frequencies showed that teachers were consistent in the practices they used during read aloud instruction across the four books but varied in their styles, in terms of
the way they mixed the three facets of storybook reading (Martinez & Teale, 1993). However, a more in-depth, qualitative analysis in a subsequent study of the video transcripts showed how the teachers’ styles differed (Teale & Martinez, 1996). Furthermore, ANOVA methods used to compare students’ comprehension results revealed a significant differences across classrooms (Teale & Martinez, 1996). From these analyses, the authors concluded that the teacher whose students performed best on the story grammar comprehension measure had class discussions surrounding the text that were very directed, and that the elements highlighted in these discussions were key to the text and helped move the story along. In addition, every aspect of the text was addressed during discussion. This was done during the reading of the story, as well as following, during a review, which was unique to this one teacher. This teacher was also careful to emphasize textually explicit information during the read aloud. On the contrary, some teachers appeared to carry out practices that might impede students’ this comprehension measure, including a focus on unimportant information, which focused more inferencing from the text than substantive information; lengthy conversations that while inclusive of classroom students, sometimes drew attention away from the main story line; over-emphasis placed on the prediction of upcoming words encountered in texts; as well as minimal discussions surrounding the text and lack of student involvement. While this study, using quantitative and qualitative methods, highlighted teachers’ practices during shared storybook reading of high-quality, children’s literature, and also how these practices affected students’ literacy outcomes, only a particular type of comprehension measure was utilized. Furthermore, only a small group of teachers, who were characterized beforehand as “very good” teachers, was identified to participate in
the study. Observing the practices of a more representative group of teachers, using additional comprehension measures, might highlight other read aloud practices that support students’ text engagement.

Hoffman and colleagues (1993) also studied the read aloud practices of teachers in classrooms. More specifically, the researchers were interested in the frequency of the read aloud experience as a part of classroom instruction, the choice and organization of the literature utilized, the way the time is utilized during read aloud instruction, and the opportunities for response and interaction offered to children. As part of the study, questionnaires were designed which were sent to major institutions with education programs throughout the United States. 30 packets were returned, from varying states and regions in the country, for a total of 537 classroom questionnaires, from classrooms of mixed income level and diversity in student ethnicity. These questionnaires were addressed to preservice teachers and they were asked to report on their most recent observation in an elementary school classroom, as well as to describe in detail the setting of the observation, the number of hours they observed, and whether the read aloud which they observed (if any) was typical. The respondents reported spending, on average, six hours per day in the classrooms they described. Data analysis, based upon calculated frequencies, showed that the majority of teachers (74%) across the board, despite differences in school location and student body, read aloud to their classes from a trade book on the day that they were observed, with slightly more read alouds taking place in Kindergarten and the primary grades (76%) than in the intermediate grades (69%). Results also showed that in relation to the selection of literature used during the read alouds, the majority of choices (over 75%) that teachers made seemed both carefully
selected and of high quality, reflecting highly recommended books of published literature for children. In addition, results revealed that only a small number of books (34%) chosen by teachers for read alouds were related to a unit of study, except for Kindergarten, where this number increased to 59%. In relation to time spent reading and discussing the literature, results showed that most teachers (88%) took about 10 to 20 minutes to read the story, and that fewer than 5 minutes were used for the majority of discussions of text, either before or after the reading of the story; however, only a minimal number of teachers (3%) spent 20 minutes or more discussing the story after reading. Finally, results also highlighted that response opportunities and options provided for children, including writing, drawing, or other follow-up activities, were provided in fewer than 25% of the observed read alouds, with writing (36%) and drawing (36%) being the most common. Although these findings are based upon the third-party observations of novice, preservice teachers, and what they saw taking place in classrooms, the results of this study are nonetheless important in understanding more about what happens as a part of read aloud instruction in the classroom in terms of teacher practices, and what types of texts are being read, particularly in classrooms characterized by mixed income levels and diversity in student ethnicity.

This group of studies highlights the instructional practices of teachers’ during shared storybook reading, also termed read aloud instruction. In their extensive study on teacher practices during shared storybook reading in preschool classrooms, Dickinson and Smith (1994) were interested in identifying patterns of teacher-child interactions, and if these affect children’s language and literacy development. Results of their research revealed three distinct approaches to book reading among the teachers, which were co-
constructive, didactic-interactional, and performance oriented. They also found that these different styles, reflected in different instructional practices, affected children’s performance on vocabulary outcomes significantly. Martinez and Teale (1993) and Teale and Martinez (1996) studies also looked at shared storybook reading in Kindergarten classrooms, through the interactions of the teacher and students surrounding both the content and structure of the story, and literature used during the reading, and how these practices affected student comprehension outcomes. Analysis from their study revealed that teachers differed in their instructional read aloud practices according to focus, type of information, and instructional strategies. Furthermore, the authors concluded the students who performed the best on comprehension measures were instructed by a teacher who led very directed discussions surrounding text reading and addressed every part of the text explicitly, both before, during and after reading. Finally, Hoffman and colleagues (1993) researched the read aloud practices of elementary teachers, as well as the frequency of read aloud lessons, through observations conducted by preservice teachers. While the practices that the observed teachers engaged in appeared to vary, the majority of the teachers reflected in the study engaged in some sort of read aloud instruction, utilizing high quality children’s literature.

**Instructional practices during read alouds that encourage active engagement.**

I now highlight the work of Beck and McKeown (1997), as well as Beck, McKeown and colleagues (1996), and Sandora and colleagues (1999), who have done extensive research on models of successful reading, which specifically highlight students’ need for active engagement with text which supports learning and understanding reflective of constructivist thinking, as referenced previously. While not only used with read aloud
instruction, their work is important to highlight, nonetheless, because of its influential focus on active text reading. Furthermore, the studies that I do highlight in this section pertain to read aloud instruction. Developed by Beck and colleagues (1997), Questioning the Author (QtA) is a strategy that encourages students to actively engage with text reading in order to foster a deeper understanding by learning to query the author. Although the strategy observes students’ interaction with written text, its primary focus is really the language that is produced during classroom discourse that surrounds their interaction with the text. Rather than reading and taking in information from text which reflects a passive approach, the QtA strategy encourages students to ask questions of the author and the text in an active manner, which reflects their ongoing engagement. Through the formation of their questions, which the authors refer to as queries, students learn more about the text. The principal of understanding is the foundation of QtA and is based on constructivism. As such, QtA engages students in reading and helps solidify their understanding of a text through meaning construction. It also teaches and encourages students to form questions for the author while reading, as well as to critique the author’s writing throughout the process. The goal of this strategy is to encourage students to think beyond the text which is shown on a printed page within a written piece and to instead consider the author's intent for the selection and his or her success, or lack thereof, at sharing it with the reader. The idea behind questioning, or “querying”, during reading helps students see how a text stands on its own, and to measure its value in that sense. It also shows students how to discover the author’s intent for a piece of writing, as well as to determine the clarity in the writing, and the validity behind the organization
behind the text (McKeown, Beck, & Worthy, 1993). In this way, student readers become empowered through their learning by taking ownership of the reading process.

In their 1999 study of the effects discussion techniques on students’ comprehension and interpretation of complex literature as a part of read aloud instruction, Sandora and colleagues (1999) found that students’ responses to follow up questions, as well as story recall, were both more lengthy and complex as a result of the integration of QtA. In their research, the authors compared the effects of two discussion techniques surrounding text reading, QtA and the Great Books approach, with older students, in the sixth and seventh grades. Both approaches place an emphasis on creating opportunities for students to engage with text ideas, collaboratively construct meaning, and to share ideas through discussion. They also both encourage students to look more closely at authorial intent, and are guided by a discussion leader, or teacher. However, they differ, in that QtA encourages students to put together ideas that construct meaning as they are encountered during text reading, whereas the Great Books approach encourages this process to take place following the reading of text. Furthermore, in QtA, questioning is based upon the ideas that the students think the author is trying to communicate, and follows up with what that means how it connects to other text ideas. The Great Books approach, however, focuses more on questions of fact, interpretation, and evaluation. Participating students came from sixth and seventh grade classrooms in a school of predominantly African-American, lower SES enrollment, and all classes had comparable reading achievement scores. The sixth grade students read and discussed with a researcher four literature pieces from the Great Book series, using the QtA approach, while the seventh grade students read and discussed the same pieces, using the Great
Books approach. All texts were read by the first author, who had experience in both instructional methods. During the lesson, she read the story, out loud, while students followed along in their own books. The two measures used to assess comprehension and interpretation as a part of the study were students’ recalls and responses to open-ended questions, reflective of text understanding. Video recordings of these sessions were made, which showed that the number of students who participated in the session implementations were similar. Following the implementation of the sessions, interviews were conducted to allow students the opportunity to provide a recall of the story and to answer three open-ended questions regarding the text, which were audiotaped and transcribed. After data collection, quantitative analysis, using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) methods, was used to determine a statistical difference between the two discussion methods, with QtA facilitating students’ comprehension and interpretation of the stories. Additional analysis using ANCOVA methods revealed that students in the QtA discussions provided longer recalls. Furthermore, follow-up qualitative analysis of the transcripts revealed an integration of more complex story elements than students in the Great Books discussions. While conducted with older children who were beyond the emergent reading stages, and might be described as learners involved in “reading to learn”, this study, nonetheless, offered significant findings regarding read aloud instruction. Conducted with students in sixth and seventh grade classrooms in a school of predominantly African-American, lower SES enrollment, an aspect of particular importance to the present study, the research revealed that the integration of QtA, an interactive text reading strategy that focuses on during text discussion, affected classroom discourse, changing it from more teacher-dominated and a focus on information retrieval,
to a classroom discourse that is reflective of a shared dialogue and discussion leading to building ideas and understanding surrounding text, both before, during and following text reading. It is important to note that unlike prior studies reviewed, the students in this were instructed by one of the researchers, an individual already skilled in QtA, and that all participating students also had individual copies of the texts that were being read. Whether the results of this study might be affected were the read aloud sessions to be implemented by the students’ regular classroom teachers, and without their access to the copies of the text, requires additional follow-up research.

Text Talk is another comprehension strategy in which teachers and students participate in robust vocabulary instruction, integrated closely with comprehension instruction. First implemented by Beck and McKeown (2001), Text Talk has two primary goals. The first goal is to develop student comprehension through interspersed questions in which students are asked to reflect upon the ideas in the story, talk about them, and make connections among them as the text progresses, as during classroom instruction. These questions must be open ended, and require students to talk about the ideas in the story. Beyond the building of comprehension skills, however, Text Talk also aims to develop students’ language development. Through the types of questions asked, greater language production is elicited from students (Lane & Writing, 2007). Furthermore, Text Talk emphasizes robust vocabulary instruction. Many of the complex and sophisticated words found in trade books require explicit instruction by the teacher, after the story is read and Text Talk encourages this type of vocabulary instruction (Beck & McKeown, 2001). The Text Talk lesson is also focused on the read aloud by the teacher, using a high-quality trade book. The books, Beck and McKeown (2001) argue, should be chosen
based upon the criteria for the inclusion of robust words, rich concepts and a balance of text and illustrations. They should be conceptually challenging so that they require students to require students to grapple with ideas and take an active, versus passive stance, toward constructing text meaning. They should also provide a basis for children to explore these ideas through language. Most importantly, they should present a complexity of events and topics that might be unfamiliar or unknown to students and thus incite rich discussions about the text (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

In their study of Kindergarten and first grade classrooms, Beck and McKeown (2001), using qualitative descriptive analysis, described the ways that Text Talk, integrated using the above-described practices, helped teachers in classrooms during read aloud instruction. Their research was conducted in an urban public school district in a high-poverty area, where all of the participating students were African American, and 75% of the student body received free or reduced lunch. Following the integration of Text Talk practices in the classrooms, the researchers noted that participating teachers became more aware of the difference between constructing the meaning of ideas in a text with their students, as opposed to retrieving information from a text. They also became more adept at understanding how difficult it is for students to begin to gain meaning from decontextualized language that they encounter in the classroom. As they integrated Text Talk into their instruction, teachers began to utilize questions that encouraged learners to talk about the text in depth, connecting ideas throughout their reading. They also developed follow-up questions to scaffold students’ further learning based upon these ideas. Furthermore, as they integrated Text Talk, they helped students to make use of their prior knowledge in a meaningful way. Finally, the strategy allowed teachers to
become further aware of how pictures can sometimes draw away from the processing of linguistic content in a text for young readers, as well as the importance of taking advantage of the introduction of many sophisticated vocabulary words in texts, and how those might be explicitly taught to aid in students’ meaning-making (Beck & McKeown, 2001). It is important to note that Beck and McKeown’s research surrounding Text Talk is the only study in this review that might not be classified as an empirical study. Nonetheless, the findings are significant, because of the evidence revealed which supports the idea that Text Talk practices have the power to change the interactions that take place during read aloud instruction between teachers and their students. It is also important to highlight this research because of Beck and McKeown’s seminal research surrounding text reading. Their research is also relevant to the present study because it was conducted in an urban public school district in a high-poverty area, where all of the participating students, who were emergent readers, were African American, and 75% of the student body received free or reduced lunch. As such, this population mirrors very closely the population of the present study.

Furthermore, Klesius and Griffith (1996) describe a study which they conducted, which supports a technique they term interactive storybook reading. Using this technique, teachers read to small groups of at-risk Kindergarten students, displaying practices of interactive read alouds. While shared book readings are important for young learners, interactive book readings, the authors specify, are particularly important for at-risk learners because they are more informal, conversational, and conducted with small groups of students, as opposed to the whole class, in an interactive manner. In addition, during interactive storybook readings, there is a balance of teacher-and student-initiated
events. Furthermore, because of this balance, there is a strong emphasis placed upon oral language development, and non-predictable sequences of dialogue and interactions. Finally, during these readings, a smaller text, as opposed to a larger big book, which the whole class can see, is used, and the focus of the activity is a creation of meaning surrounding story reading. As such, the authors argue that this type of reading experience provides at-risk learners an opportunity that mimics the lapreading experiences of young children with their parents at home which might be lacking. The authors conducted their small study over a three-week period, surrounding interactive storybook reading with ten Kindergarten children, who were identified by their teachers because their language and literacy development fell below that of their fellow students. Some of the students in the study were identified as second-language learners. Dividing the students into two groups of five, the researchers took turns directing the interactive storybook reading sessions, which the reading of a new story, as well as a previously read book selected by children for rereading, while the other videotaped the sessions. Each session lasted about 15-20 minutes. Although the researchers were the adults reading out loud during the sessions, based upon their observations of interactions between adult and students during these readings, Klesius and Griffith (1996), using descriptive analysis, found that the while the reading sessions varied over the three-week period, more child-initiated comments and questions became evident after the students became aware of the instructors’ receptiveness to their engagement and participation. The researchers identified the sessions as being interactive for the following reasons: (a) the teachers/adults and students drew attention to information in text illustrations; (b) they predicted, together, what would happen next; and (c) they shared related experiences in relation to the
reading. In particular, the researchers felt that several important defining components emerged during these sessions, including questioning, scaffolding, and the creation of a lapreading ambience. Looking at how children responded to these sessions, the researchers found that they desired a particular closeness to the teacher/researcher, similar to lapreading, allowing for more direct interactivity and closeness between the reader, the text, and the children. Over the course of the study, Klesius and Griffith (1996) found that children’s independent interest in books grew. They also found that the students began to replicate and internalize many of the important teacher behaviors modeled in the study, and their talk and dialogue regarding the text grew. Klesius and Griffith’s findings are based upon research with smaller groups of students, specifically emergent, at-risk readers; however, additional research in this area might be conducted to see if similar results ensue in a larger, whole-class setting, as providing this type of instruction for multiple groups of learners might prove logistically challenging for teachers, simply because of instructional time constraints.

More recently, in 2010 and 2011, Wiseman (2011) and Hoffman (2011) also conducted studies that looked more closely at the interactive nature of read alouds, and how this aspect is important for learning opportunities for emergent readers because teachers and students can scaffold and model comprehension skills and techniques, as well as engage readers, within a community of learners. Based upon data from a nine-month ethnographic study in an urban Kindergarten classroom, Wiseman’s (2011) study highlights how a teacher’s teaching practices during read aloud instruction facilitated a rich interaction in which students could make sense of stories and construct meaning together, while providing students the opportunity to engage in open-ended conversations...
with reading instruction. This interactive read aloud time also provided students an opportunity to respond to literature based upon their prior knowledge. More specifically, data analysis, utilizing qualitative research methods, consisted of reading through transcripts, field notes, and memos, and forming emergent themes and topics. Through coding and data analysis, four major categories of teacher response emerged, which included confirmation, modeling, extending ideas, and building meaning. Results from this analysis revealed that read alouds were an important literacy practice which allowed students to participate in classroom instruction and provided opportunities for them to understand “how books work”. During the activity, students were able to connect their own personal background knowledge to the texts they read to make connections, as well as to demonstrate higher levels of cognitive understanding. Most importantly, the teacher provided students with the opportunity to make meaning during text reading, through open-ended conversation and dialogue based upon a building of understanding in a shared learning environment.

Hoffman’s (2011) study also highlighted interactive read aloud instruction, and included an emphasis on monthly professional development sessions for the Kindergarten teacher, during which the researcher and teacher collaboratively discussed the design of instructional supports, primarily through discourse, that would provide students the opportunity to engage in discussions about the text in the read aloud setting, over a period of six months. These sessions were divided into collaborative learning activities based upon the cycle of instruction, including reflection, planning, teaching and assessment. The instructional supports decided upon focused upon the following goals: a) encouragement of student talk to build interaction; b) strategic use of reconstruction of
meaning; c) strategic use of co-construction of meaning; and d) shifting focus from literal to interpretive. Results based upon observation showed that the overall emphasis of co-construction during the teacher’s lessons supported meaning making and entry points for discussion which allowed for varying interpretations of the text by the students. It is important to note that the choice of literature used during the read aloud sessions was also emphasized during the professional development sessions, with a focus on utilizing texts that would lend themselves to rich discussions. Similar to the research of Klesius and Griffith (1996), Wiseman (2010) and Hoffman (2011) highlighted the practices of a Kindergarten teacher during an interactive read aloud, but in a whole-class setting. Additional qualitative analysis based upon case studies of multiple teachers integrating interactive read alouds might prove beneficial in creating a better understanding surrounding successful read aloud practices, particularly when the interactive nature of the reading is highlighted. This interactive nature, brought forth by Klesius and Griffith (1996), Wiseman (2011) and Hoffman (2011), is particularly important to the present study, as the Voices Reading instructional read aloud encourages this type of interactive learning. Furthermore, Wiseman highlighted the crucial role of students’ ability to connect their own background knowledge to the texts they read, allowing them to make connections which promote a deeper, active engagement with text. She also emphasized the role of the teacher, in creating a shared learning environment, reflective of all of her students. These are all aspects that will be discussed in detail in the present study.

This second group of studies presented as part of this literature review highlights the instructional practices of teachers’ practices during read aloud instruction, and how these practices support active text engagement (Beck and McKeown, 1997; Beck and
colleagues, 1996; Sandora et al., 1999) and interactive text reading (Klesius and Griffith, 1996; Wiseman, 2011). Through the integration of QtA and Text Talk, methods of instruction for interacting with text during read alouds, Beck and McKeown (1997), Beck, McKeown and colleagues (1996), and Sandora and colleagues (1999) found that teachers’ practices, both prior to, during, and following text reading, had the power to significantly affect classroom discourse surrounding reading, changing it from a teacher-led focus to a student-led focus, leading to active engagement among students and the building of ideas surrounding reading. Klesius and Griffith (1996), Wiseman (2011), and Hoffman (2011) looked more specifically at interactive text reading. Through their research with teachers reading with smaller groups of students, Klesius and Griffith (1996) found that children’s independent interest in books grew, and that they began to utilize many of the important teacher metacognitive learning behaviors modeled by their teachers, as their dialogue surrounding text reading evolved and grew. Wiseman’s (2011) study of one particular teacher as she integrated interactive read aloud instruction in a whole-class setting revealed that the teacher provided students with the opportunity to actively make meaning during text reading, through open-ended conversation and dialogue, based upon a building of understanding in a shared learning environment.

**Most commonly employed instructional practices during read alouds.** I end this review with the recent work of Fisher and colleagues (2004), who attempted to explicitly define and outline through their research what the most common instructional practices present during read aloud instruction, at both the elementary and middle-school level, and with what frequency these practices might be carried out. Fisher and colleagues (2004) observed and compared the read aloud practices of expert reading
teachers with randomly selected teachers who worked in urban schools. During phase I of their study, expert reading teachers were identified and nominated by their school administrators to be in the research study for their proficient ability to conduct read alouds. Observation field notes were taken which showed the components of a quality read aloud. These components were placed into a rubric. Following, during phase II, 120 randomly chosen teachers, in grades 3-8, were observed by researchers as they conducted read alouds. During the observations, these teachers were rated on a Likert-type scale on each of the identified components from phase I, placed into a rubric. Data analysis which included measures of central tendency was calculated across participants on the rubric. In addition, a random stratified sample of 18 phase II teachers from each of the 3 grades took place in individual or group taped interviews to help provide more insight on the planning and practice involved in their read aloud instruction. These transcripts were analyzed and coded into categories of factors that emerged during a review of the data. Findings from the analysis based upon observations from phase I revealed that there are a common set of implementation practices among teachers nominated as experts during their read aloud instruction. These practices are as follows: (a) books were chosen based upon students’ interests, as well as developmental, emotional, and social levels; (b) book selections had been both previewed, as well as practice, by the teacher; (c) a purpose was established before the beginning of the reading of the text; (d) teachers modeled fluent reading as they read aloud the text; (e) during text reading, teachers were both animated and expressive; (f) teachers both stopped periodically and questioned students in a thought-provoking manner to focus them on explicit aspects of the text; and (g) connections were made between the read aloud and
students’ independent reading and writing. Furthermore, findings from the data analysis based upon phase II revealed that teachers’ consistency in including animation and expression and text discussions during their read aloud instruction was high, ranking 46% and 34% respectively. Their consistency in terms of book selection was high also, ranking 55%. In addition, the teachers’ consistency was rated fairly consistent at establishing a purpose for text reading, ranking 34%. However, teachers’ consistency in terms of previewing and practicing (17%), modeling fluent reading (9%), as well as providing connections to independent reading and writing (19%), was lower. Fisher and colleagues (2004) research revealed consistent, “expert” teaching practices during read aloud instruction among all teachers. While further analysis used as follow-up to this study might be conducted with teachers of emergent readers in the younger grades to expand upon this picture, this study provides a both a detailed description of the current practices of “expert teachers” during read aloud instruction, as well as a description of the frequency of the occurrence of these practices among a random group of selected teachers. The study also provides an appropriate introduction to the next section of this literature review, which focuses on basal reading programs and read aloud instruction, and more specifically, the read aloud practices that these programs support.

**Basal Reading Programs and Read Aloud Instruction**

Basal reading programs are utilized in the majority of first grade classrooms in the United States; as such, their influence on classroom practice and teacher development is substantial (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). Because of their influence, we need to continue to look further at how curriculum which supports read aloud instruction (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Fien et al. 2011), and the integration of rich, children’s
literature in the classroom (Hoffman et al., 1998; Martinez & McGee, 2000; Pearson & Duke, 2002; Williams & Bauer, 2006; Wiseman, 2011), supports readers’ literacy development. Because of the ongoing scarcity of children’s literature that was published during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, teachers have long relied on basals as the focal point of their literacy instruction. Despite the increase in the publication of children’s literature later in the 20th century, teachers still did not have access to these texts in their classrooms or school libraries (Martinez & McGee, 2000), thus increasing the prominent role that basal reading series had on teaching and learning curriculum (Pilonieta, 2010), or rather, what is taught and how it is taught. Basal reading programs are all-inclusive sets of instructional materials that are designed to teach reading to learners in a sequential, skill-oriented way which is grade specific (Wepner and Feely, 1993). Throughout the first part of the 20th century in the United States, these programs gradually became more restrictive in how they were structured, with an increased reliance on controlled vocabulary. They also grew more comprehensive in terms of their components, and evolved to include pupil texts, teacher guides, practice workbooks, assessments, and other instructional support materials (Hoffman et al., 1998). In terms of reading curriculum, these controlled-vocabulary basal reading programs dominated instruction from the 1930s to late 1980s. However, as advocates for whole language-based teaching strategies which prompted the literature-based movement became prominent in the 1980s (Goodman, 1988), the pressure for basal reading programs to respond to such shifts became evident. In light of this, basal reading series that were literature-based, where there was less focus on isolated skills, and a greater emphasis, instead, on experiences with literature, became more common (Hoffman et al., 1998).
the same time, literacy instruction which focused on the development of comprehension strategies among students became a major focus of research, which was also reflected in basal reading programs (Pilonieta, 2010).

Following the publication of the National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) in 2000, which emphasized the five critical areas of reading instruction (i.e. phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), the reading debate over skills-based instruction, evident in earlier basal reading programs, versus authentic engagement with literature, reflective of the whole language movement, was no longer a topic of much prominence; rather, the emphasis, instead, was placed on a balanced approach which encourages a comprehensive reading program reflective of both schools of thought (Pearson, 2002). However, the accountability movement of recent years has shifted the inclusion of authentic reading experiences with literature to an increased reliance on the measurement of literacy standards through high-stakes testing focused primarily on students’ isolated skill development (Williams & Bauer, 2006). Because of these changes, many teachers currently believe that authentic reading material, like high-quality children’s literature, should not be incorporated into their basal reading programs (MacGillivary, Ardell, Curwen, & Palma, 2004; Williams & Bauer, 2006), despite the abundance of children’s literature currently available to teachers as opposed to prior decades (Martinez & McGee, 2000), as well as the strong support for using this literature during literacy instruction (Hoffman et al., 1998; Martinez & McGee, 2000; Pearson, 2002; Williams & Bauer, 2006; Wiseman, 2011).
Basal Reading Programs: A Review of the Literature

Despite the prevalence of basal reading series in school classrooms, studies which review basal reading series and how they systematically support students’ reading development are limited. However, in their research on first grade basal reading programs, Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998), in coordination with the National Research Council, summarized the practices supported by basal reading programs in the late 1990s, based upon the research of Stein and colleagues (1993). An important aspect of the study that they note is the variability with which major instructional categories as reflected in different basal programs. Although most of the programs support instruction related to reading comprehension, few emphasize the development reading fluency, and the extent to which they provide support for oral reading development is not made clear. Within this review, however, the authors make no reference to the role of read aloud instruction, or the integration of authentic children’s literature, in relation to comprehension instruction or otherwise, nor how basal reading programs might support this. More recently, Pilonieta (2010) conducted a content analysis which looked at basal reading series, in order to examine the integration of research-based comprehension strategies as they were presented in five elementary basal reading series (Kindergarten through sixth grade) in three major adoption states (California, Texas and Florida), and more specifically, how these basal series encouraged the comprehension strategies to be taught. In order to carry out the analysis, the author created a list of comprehension strategies which were taken from the Handbooks of Reading Research. The basal reading series that were included in the study were Harcourt Brace, Houghton Mifflin, MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, Open Court, and Scott Foresman. Means and standard
deviations for the total suggestions of comprehension strategy instruction in each series were calculated, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the extent to which the suggestions varied in each basal differed by publisher and grade. Results of the analysis showed that two-thirds of the instructional recommendations in relation to comprehension were research-based; however, there were several strategies suggested by research and deemed important to students’ learning which were not included in any of the basal reading series. Furthermore, there appeared to be an overall randomness and lack of coherence in regards to how the strategies in each of the series were introduced, practiced, and applied. Finally, Pilonieta (2010) argues that the results of the study continue to indicate that there are limited opportunities for younger, emergent readers to engage in comprehension strategy instruction. While this review is informative, it still does not provide any information regarding how read alouds might be used by teachers to engage students in the comprehension strategy instruction discussed, and whether authentic literature is included in each series to support this. However, in conducting further analysis on my own of each of these five reading programs, all of them appear to incorporate children’s literature, as well as some sort of read aloud component, in at least one of their recent basal reading publications, although how systematically this component is introduced would require a more, in-depth content analysis.

In 2001, P. David Pearson and Steven Stahl, experts in the area of reading literacy, in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Education, created a consumer’s guide with a team of reviewers for choosing a basal reading program. Supporting this guide are results of an evaluation of 21 common used basal series in grades Kinder-12
that emphasize reading improvement. For each program, the evaluators reviewed descriptive information (i.e., program components, program goals and instructional emphasis, intended audience, instructional model, curriculum content, implications for the classroom and school from using the program, technology requirements, professional development costs, and program costs), as well as key, descriptive literacy characteristics of the series (i.e. phonemic awareness, word recognition and phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, meeting individual needs, professional development, and evidence of effectiveness). Of the 21 series reviewed, only 2 explicitly mentioned the integration of read alouds as a part of reading instruction: Open Court and Voyager Expanded Learning System. Open Court, referenced previously, used in Grades Pre-Kindergarten through sixth, is a basal series which includes direct instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness, as well as direct comprehension instruction using high-quality classic and contemporary literature. Open Court, the guide states, immerses students in the engagement of authentic literature, which are provided to the teacher in the form of read alouds used in daily lessons, to help with fluency. However, there is no mention of how these read alouds can also be used to support the development of additional literacy outcomes, such as comprehension skills, vocabulary development, or oral language development. Voyager Expanded Learning System is a comprehensive reading system that is designed for grades Kindergarten through third grade. The guide states that comprehension is emphasized through read alouds and student reading activities. However, there is no emphasis placed on the type literature used to support this type of instruction, nor is there a link made between read aloud instruction and the development of other literacy skills.
Despite their prevalence and important role in American schools, as referenced previously, studies on basal reading series, in general, and how they integrate read aloud instruction specifically, utilizing children’s literature, continues to be lacking. While there is less literature available on how curriculum can support read aloud instruction, Edwards Santoro and colleagues (2008) do report on their federally funded read aloud project, which was designed to create an instructional framework, or curriculum, for teaching comprehension of both complex narrative and information texts to first-grade students in general education classrooms as part of read alouds (Baker, Chard, & Edwards, 2002). It is important to note, however, that the curriculum that the authors developed was not associated with or guided by a particular basal reading series. The goals of the read aloud three-year project were as follows: (a) challenge readers to develop complex comprehension strategies that can be utilized during the reading of first grade narrative and information texts; (b) encourage students to use narrative and information text through the use of text-to-text connections; (c) expand and foster student comprehension and dialogic interactions between and among students; and (d) utilize independent retellings of texts as the main outcome of the research. Before beginning the project, the authors reviewed national and state standards in order to hone in on the important aspects of read aloud instruction. Findings which guided their study implementation revealed that read aloud experiences should connect information from students’ real lives to texts, as well as text to their real lives. They also found that read alouds should provide opportunities for students to predict and justify what will happen next in stories, as well as describe the texts that they engage utilizing their own words. Reflective of these suggestions, the authors suggest that both narrative and information
texts be used during read aloud instruction to meet comprehension goals as part of a reading curriculum. They also supported the use of first grade standards for both science and social studies, as well as language arts and comprehension, to guide their text choices and instruction. In considering the structure of the curriculum, Edwards Santoro and colleagues (2008) developed week-long units (15 total), consisting of both a narrative text and an information text, which were based upon either a science or social studies theme, with the goal of helping students build connections between texts, themes, other curriculum sources, as well as shared activities and events. In order to scaffold instruction so that students would become more involved in the interactions surrounding the texts, the first five lessons of the read aloud curriculum emphasized the teacher’s demonstration of using think alouds, models, and explanations during text reading; the second five lessons focused on guiding students responses, and taught teachers how to ask questions and elicit answers with prompts and support; finally, the third five lessons encouraged more guided as well as independent responses from students, with less teacher support and prompting. Each unit of the read aloud curriculum designed by the researchers was made up of four lessons, two for each type of text, and on the last day of the week the teachers were encouraged to re-read one of the texts or to do an additional extension activity, based upon prior readings. Each read aloud lesson lasted about 20-30 minutes.

Book selection, the authors highlighted, was extremely important to the implementation of the project, and was reflective of topic, target audience, length, cost, availability, representation of diversity, text coherence, and potential for text-to-text and text-to-topic connections. In addition, vocabulary instruction was an integral aspect, with
the researchers choosing two for words from each text for explicit instruction. These words were not only functional and meaningful, but they were also rich, varied and interesting, as well as crucial to the understanding of the story being read. Finally, the authors included before, during, and after components in all of the lessons. The before reading components included aspects such as identifying the purpose for reading the story, previewing key aspects of the story (i.e., title, author, illustrator), predicting and/or priming, as well defining critical vocabulary. During reading aspects included using consistent frameworks, such as K-W-L charts, to discuss the text, as well as encourage text connections. They also included the incorporation of question-asking strategies, inferences, self-monitoring techniques, and vocabulary instruction. After reading components included opportunities for students to retell the stories, as well as opportunities for introducing, reviewing, and extending vocabulary. Comparing the performance of students who participated in the read aloud curriculum project to those who did not, findings indicate that enhancing read alouds with comprehension strategies and text-based discussions affect student performance positively, as they assessed students who were most at risk for overall reading and comprehension difficulties, as well as students who were on the path for successful reading development. More specifically, students from classrooms who were involved with the curriculum demonstrated higher levels of vocabulary knowledge and comprehension, and were able to conduct more accurate and in-depth story retellings. Participating students were also able to speak with an increased depth and metacognitive awareness about comprehension. However, the researchers did not find any differences in comprehension and vocabulary achievement
between the at-risk and average-achieving students who participated in the read aloud curriculum.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

In summary, research reveals that effective read alouds are important to the development of literacy skills among young, emergent readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Edwards Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008; Fisher et al., 2004; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; National Early Literacy Panel, 2009; Snow et al., 1998; Teale, 2003). However, despite the support for read aloud instruction as an important literacy tool, the effectiveness of this literacy tool has been debated. Reflective of this, I began this literature review with an overview of several seminal studies regarding the effectiveness of read alouds, either carried out with parents and children or teachers and children, including the work of Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) as well as Meyer and colleagues (1994), whose research revealed mixed support for the power of read alouds as a literacy tool. I then followed up with the work of Bus and colleagues (1995), which contradicted the findings of Meyer et al. (1994) and Scarborough and Dobrich (1994), recognizing a medium to strong effect size of storybook reading on students’ literacy skills. Whitehurst and colleagues (1988) work, although taking place a decade earlier, echoes the findings of Bus and colleagues (1995), and the positive relationship between storybook reading and literacy outcomes. I then ended this section with the research of the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2009), as well as Swanson and colleagues (2011), which also supports these positive findings.

Following a discussion of these important research studies, I continued this section with a review of relevant research that focuses more specifically on the instructional
practices during read alouds in the school setting. As such, I reviewed the research of Dickinson and Smith (1994), Martinez and Teale (1993) and Teale and Martinez (1996), as well as Hoffman and colleagues (1993), which focuses on the instructional practices of teachers during shared book reading. I then reviewed the research of Beck and McKeown (1997), as well as Beck and colleagues (1996), and Sandora and colleagues (1999), whose work reflects a constructivist approach to reading instruction, specifically read aloud instruction, and supports students’ active text engagement as an important aspect of reading aloud. I followed this discussion with a review of the research of Klesius and Griffith (1996), Wiseman (2011), and Hoffman (2011) on interactive text reading during read aloud instruction, which also reflects this constructivist approach to reading, as well as ideas surrounding situated cognition and literacy learning. I then proceeded with a review of the research Fisher and colleague (2004) on common implementation practices of teachers during read alouds. This research provides an appropriate segue into the present study, which addresses the read aloud practices of one particular first grade teacher, and how she utilizes those practices to mediate students’ text engagement, as part of her literacy instruction.

Finally, before ending this review, I looked more closely at how read aloud instruction, and the utilization of children’s literature, is carried out in basal reading series. Following the publication of the National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) in 2000, a balanced approach to reading instruction was supported (Pearson, 2002), which includes an emphasis on skills instruction, including phonics, as well as a holistic approach which supports the integration of children’s authentic experiences engaging in literature. However, the accountability movement of
recent years has shifted this inclusion of these authentic literacy experiences with literature to an increased reliance, instead, on the measurement of literacy standards through high-stakes assessment which ignores this important holistic approach to reading instruction (Williams & Bauer, 2006). As such, I highlighted the research of Snow and colleagues (1998), in coordination with the National Research Council, which summarized the practices supported by basal reading programs in the late 1990s, and the noted the variability with which major instructional categories as reflected in different basal programs. While most basal programs supported the instruction of comprehension skills, the emphasis on other literacy skills was not as consistent. More important to the present study, however, was the lack of coverage of read aloud instruction, or the integration of authentic children’s literature, nor how basal reading programs might support this. I also reviewed the more recent work of Pilonieta (2010), which looked at five prominent basal reading and how they integrated research-based comprehension strategies. The study concluded that the majority of instructional recommendations in relation to comprehension were research-based, although there were several important research-based strategies not covered in any of the series. Furthermore, the authors concluded that there appeared to be an overall randomness and lack of coherence in regards to how the strategies in each of the series were introduced, practiced, and applied, and that there are limited opportunities for younger, emergent readers to engage in comprehension strategy instruction during the reading. Finally, I provided an overview of the work of P. David Pearson and Steven Stahl, in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Education (2001), who created a consumer’s guide with a team of reviewers for choosing a basal reading program. Of the 21 series
reviewed for the creation of this guide, the authors found that only two explicitly mentioned the integration of read alouds as a part of reading instruction.

In this section, I also included the work of Edwards Santoro and colleagues (2008) who reported, more specifically, on their federally funded read aloud project, designed to create an instructional framework, or curriculum, for teaching comprehension of both complex narrative and information texts to first-grade students in general education classrooms as part of read alouds (Baker, Chard, & Edwards, 2002). While this study was not associated with a particular basal reading series, findings revealed that book selection, vocabulary instruction, and the inclusion of before, during, and after components in all of the lessons was central to the success of their read aloud curriculum project. This particular aspect of this review also provides an applicable segue into the discussion of the present study, as its purpose is not only to observe and analyze the read aloud practices of a particular first grade teacher, as she mediates her students’ text engagement, but also to highlight how the curriculum that she uses, part of a basal reading series, supports her in this process.
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Present Study; Research Question

There is a continued need to examine what classroom teaching practices support students’ engagement with text during read aloud lessons because of the important role that read aloud instruction can play in students’ development of literacy skills (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; McCormick, 1977; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Trelease, 2001), and the paucity of literature surrounding what teachers do during this type of instruction (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Fien et al., 2011; Morrow, 1988). This research bears particular significance for instruction of young, emergent, primary school readers in diverse settings who might be at risk for academic failure. For these learners, positive and successful classroom literacy experiences provided by teachers through activities such as read aloud instruction are important to reading development and achievement (Medina & Schumm, 2012). Reflective of this, the purpose of this study is to examine the literacy instruction of a first grade teacher’s utilization of a multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson, that is part of the Voices Reading curriculum and that was being used as the core literacy instruction in a summer academic program serving low income children who were at risk for poor literacy achievement and academic achievement. This research is guided by the question of how this first grade teacher in a six-week academic program for students at risk for academic failure used the Voices Reading multicultural, instructional read aloud lesson to mediate students’ engagement with text.

More specifically, I seek to delve more deeply into what practices support the teacher’s intentions to mediate students’ text engagement through an APS during read
aloud instruction, and to understand how the teacher uses the *Voices Reading* curriculum and program context to support this instruction (Beck et al., 1996; Gay, 2000; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; RAND Reading Study Group & Snow, 2002; Zaner Bloser 2005a; Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Fien et al., 2011; Hoffman et al., 1998; Martinez & McGee, 2000; Pearson & Duke, 2002; Williams & Bauer, 2006; Wiseman, 2011). The construct of APS, representative of constructivist theory, suggests that students are actively involved in the reading process. As such, they are encouraged to pose their own questions and arguments, as well as respond to their fellow classmates’ and teacher’s questions and arguments (Snow, Burns, et al., 1998), with a focus on an ongoing discussion of critical story ideas and opportunities to be reflective about what they read (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Martinez and Teale, 1996). Interactions such as these, representative of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, afford students opportunities to relate text to their own lives and cultural backgrounds through personal connections (Sipe, 2008).

Thus, the following research question drove my study and data analysis, as well as the research analysis results and conclusions: How does the teacher promote an APS during the read aloud lesson and how is this aspect of her teaching guided by the curriculum and program context? Based upon the literature regarding constructivism (Beck et al., 1996; Fosnot, 2005a; Gordon, 2009; Kintsch, 2009) and situated cognition (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997a; Robbins & Aydede, 2009), I argue that the implementation of a read aloud lesson can be considered a situated learning activity carried out by a classroom teacher that is used to support students’ engagement as they construct meaning from text, which in turn supports their development of literacy skills.
In the following sections of this chapter, provide a description of the study setting, including the community where the research took place and the program used as the site of data collection. In this section, I also provide a description of the first grade classroom where my study was situated. Following, I offer an in-depth description of the *Voices Reading* curriculum, the reading literacy curriculum used during instruction at the program. Finally, I end the chapter with a description of the study participants, an overview of data collection and data sources, and a comprehensive overview of the proposed methods for data analysis.

**Description of Study Setting: Community and Summer Academic Program**

**Community.** The community where this study took place was located in a primarily black metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. The community was one of the nation’s first federally funded public housing projects. It was created as a result of funding from the federal government’s New Deal programs, under President Roosevelt, following the Great Depression of the 1930s and was completed in 1937 as a 243 unit housing project. The idea for the development of the community happened as a result of overcrowding and persistent poverty which ravaged an adjacent black community in the metropolitan city center. There was little to no running water in this area of the city, and community members had little access to electricity or indoor plumbing. Furthermore, crime thrived in the area at that time. These worsening conditions, as well as white resistance to the city’s black population expanding into white areas to the east and south of the city, spurred the beginning of this community in the northwestern part of the city. It was built and planned in a park-like area, and contained various community services, including a recreation hall, nursery, doctor’s office,
consumer cooperative store, credit union, and classrooms for tenant education program. In addition, every family had a garden, in which they could grow flowers and vegetables; and unlike other adjacent communities for black residents, living conditions were much healthier, as residents had access to modern kitchen and bath facilities, as well as utilities like hot and cold running water, gas and electricity. For several decades the area was home to the city’s black elite, and attracted more and more middle-income blacks, as well as black celebrities, entertainers, and social climbers (Dunn, 1997; Mohl, 1985).

However, as the area merged with other nearby black communities in the 1950s, within three decades, its pattern of development subsided, as home ownership dropped and the population soared, due to displacement of thousands of blacks from the area’s city center, when a major freeway was constructed. Furthermore, throughout the latter part of the 1900s, this metropolitan area became a haven for refugees fleeing troubled areas in the Caribbean and Latin America. The influx of these refugees built on already growing tensions between native black communities in the area. Often, the two groups competed for employment and economic opportunities (George, 1996), which caused additional strife within the city. In May of 1980, deadly and economically damaging riots raged throughout the community (“Building on Rock”, 1989). Since this time, a long period of tension has continued to persist in this area, based upon years of racial tension and neglect brought forth by municipal neglect, which still exist today (George, 1996). Reflective of this, the needs in this community continue to be great. Data from the 2000 Census indicate that less than 5% of the population in this community, aged 25 years and older, have received a college degree; furthermore, just under half of the
population aged 16 years and older are active in the labor force of the city (Bessell, Kloosterman, & Sembiante, 2011).

**Summer academic program.** The program where the study took place, which consists of an after-school component, as well as an academic summer component, provides children with opportunities to increase their academic performance, as well as health and well-being. My research focuses on the summer academic component, which took place during the summer of 2011. The program, which began in 1991, is a faith-based organization started by an active pastor and community leader in the community. It began when he organized a community group to take over portable buildings on the property of a nearby elementary school which were being used to distribute crack cocaine, negotiating an agreement with the local school district to establish a community organization which offered a wide variety of services to nearby community members. These services included health, career, employment parenting, leadership, as well as mentoring, academic assistance, and youth sports programs to students through an after-school and summer camp program. While the program was successful in providing these services, the leaders felt that the children it served would benefit from additional high-quality academic and personal services (Bessell, Kloosterman, & Altamirano, 2011). As such, it began its partnership with a nearby research university in 2009, providing services for youth, aged 5-12 years old in this community, primarily those who attended the local elementary school on the program’s site, which is Title 1 eligible, with the following educational goals in mind: a) to improve the academic performance and academic well-being of its youth participants; b) to increase the students’ family involvement in their children’s academic and personal enrichment; and c) to increase the
youth participants’ academic motivation, attitudes as well as perceptions regarding learning, in the hopes of positively affecting the community’s overall rate of literacy, academic achievement and attainment of college education (Kohn-Wood, 2009). At this time, the program began receiving funding through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), an initiative provided by the federal government with the goal of supporting academic enrichment opportunities for students during after-school hours at schools described as “low performing”.

Literacy instruction was an integral component of the after-school program, as well as the summer academic program, and was carried out through the implementation of the *Voices Reading* curriculum. The intention of this instruction was to reinforce children’s daily classroom instruction, by carrying out the following daily and weekly objectives: (a) participation in the reading and discussion surrounding the instructional read aloud; (b) development of comprehension through oral and written responses; (c) development of listening and speaking vocabulary; and (d) development of critical thinking skills (Bessell et al., 2011). The *Voices Reading* curriculum was implemented under the direction of a literacy expert on the faculty of the School of Education and Human Development at the university, with my assistance as a doctoral student. Academic performance targets and indicators for reading literacy were based upon improved literacy assessments, standardized test scores, student grade reports, curriculum benchmark assessments, and state educational standards benchmarks (Kohn-Wood, 2009). During the program’s implementation, academic instruction was carried out by certified teachers, with the ratio for each classroom being 1 teacher to about 25 students. Additional undergraduate students from the university were also on-site to provide
homework assistance, as well as tutoring and mentoring services. During the after-school program, reading literacy instruction was carried for 1.5 hours 2 days a week, and during the summer academic program, which lasted the entire day, for a full 90-minute literacy block, offering a unique opportunity for teachers to spend a significant portion of their instructional time, reflective of the regular academic schedule, devoted to literacy instruction (Bessell et al., 2011).

During the implementation of the program’s partnership with the university, multiple teacher trainings were conducted with the teachers on the implementation of the *Voices Reading* curriculum. These trainings provided an overview of the curriculum and its history for the teachers, as well as a preview and discussion of all of the materials and how they could be most effectively integrated as part of literacy instruction in order to meet the goals of the program. As a doctoral student who worked under the auspices of this partnership, I was integrally involved in the creation and implementation of these trainings, which occurred prior to the beginning of the school year, as well as the summer program. My role in the program also involved weekly visits to the program both during the academic year and summer programs, over the course of a two-year period, in order to provide additional curricular and logistical support and supplemental activities to the teachers as they implemented the literacy curriculum, as well as participation in planning and grade level meetings. As such, I developed a close partnership with teachers, staff and students during my time working with the program. I also became very knowledgeable in the *Voices Reading* curriculum, as I was the main point of contact for the teachers if they had any questions concerning supplies, implementation, assessment, or instructional support.
Description of the Voices Reading Curriculum

Curriculum background and overview. Developed by experts in the fields of education and psychology, specifically for urban at-risk children, the Voices Reading curriculum is unique, in that it affords students the opportunity to relate to the literature that they read in a significant and meaningful way. As such, it recognizes a strong alignment between themes of character development, such as identity awareness, and academic achievement in schooling (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a). Research studies that have been conducted in recent decades have shown that non-academic processes, such as social identification, take place concurrently with academic activities. Reflective of this, Wortham (2006) argues that it is imperative that we are cognizant of the fact that schooling is not purely based upon academic activities, so that we are better able to understand how and why the development of identity is inseparable from academic development for students (Wortham, 2006). As such, the Voices Reading curriculum, supports a knowledge which encompasses an understanding of one’s self in relation to others, or rather, ideas of identity awareness (Tomlinson et al., 1996). Furthermore, while most elements of literacy programs address the how of becoming literate, the Voices Reading curriculum claims to address the why of becoming literate providing students the opportunity to read literature in a meaningful way, through the use of multicultural read alouds, which are reflective of interests and topics familiar to the reader (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a), allowing for more interactive and engaged reading to take place (Pugh & Garcia, 1990).

The instructional read aloud, instructed with the whole class, is designed to be the cornerstone of the program, and is reflective of children’s literature that is “worth talking,
writing, and thinking about” (p. W2, Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). These central texts are the key to the overall structure and implementation of the basal series and were carefully selected, by the curriculum’s authors, because of their connection to important character development themes which also support students’ literacy development and growth as part of text reading. The instructional read aloud utilized in Voices Reading encourages teachers to expand upon students’ prior background knowledge, or funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), during literacy instruction, as well as to teach and extend vocabulary, model and instruct integral comprehension skills, support oral language development, and promote students’ character development, through an emphasis on themes such as identity awareness (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a). Furthermore, in order to close the achievement gap of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Gunderson, 2008) as they master the English language, the curriculum specifically aims to increase these students’ ability to read and use grade-level vocabulary (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). Finally, books on based on thematic units, and reflective of a multicultural focus, highlight Pugh and Garcia (1990), are important because they offer children the opportunity to read works in relation to each other, instead of in isolation, allowing for a much more rich, complex, and critical reading experience for learners.

Each grade in the curriculum is organized around the same consistent theme, which is carried out over a period of about six weeks, which are all based on one overall guiding question which remains consistent through the school year: How can we help each other? The grade level curriculum is also organized around a perspective-taking goal, which in first grade, is the opportunity for students to deepen and further develop
their personal perspective-taking ability by focusing on their inner thoughts, feeling, and values, and how these relate to those of their classmates and peers. This perspective taking goal supports students as they develop their own personalities, and begin to interact with others, building inter-personal relationships and discovering how they have a unique role in the greater community and world that surrounds them (Zaner-Bloser, 2005 a; b). During this time, the students, with the guidance of their teacher, have the opportunity to address literacy content in conjunction with a thematic content, based upon a central theme and guiding question, which is related to students’ personal growth and developing relationships with others. Over the course of the academic year, all students have the chance to engage in six thematic units, guided by six differing central questions, which are intended to spark students’ thinking and classroom dialogue and discussion surrounding text reading and engagement in literacy learning. They also engage in the reading of multicultural read alouds, as previously highlighted, which reflect these themes. The focus of my study is Grade 1, Theme 1, identity awareness, which is guided by the central questions “Who am I and who are you?” and includes the read aloud books included in the table below (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>My Name is Yoon</em> (Recorvitz, 2003)</td>
<td>A fiction text about a young Korean girl who struggles to come to terms with her changing identity as she moves to a new country, the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pablo’s Tree</em> (Mora, 1994)</td>
<td>A fiction text about a young, adopted Latino boy named Pablo’s discovery and recount of an important family ritual, the planting and decorating of a family tree, which celebrates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
his adoption into his new family and the development of his personal identity. Bilingually printed in both Spanish and English, a non-fiction text which examines and discusses the three determinants of skin color in detail, and how this contributes to the individuality of people and the multicultural nature of our world’s population: ancestry, an individual’s location in terms of proximity to the sun, and the body’s production of melanin.

**How curriculum addresses literacy achievement.** The curriculum addresses students’ literacy achievement in several ways. First, it attempts to elevate their reading achievement with a systematic and comprehensive approach to literacy that aims to exceed national requirements and aligns with state standards for both reading and character development, and exhibits effectiveness through independent research and formal assessment of its components and outcomes. In addition, *Voices Reading* inspires learners to want to take part in the reading of multicultural literature that is engaging and helps the access their background knowledge and construct new knowledge around text reading. By doing this, the curriculum motivates students to communicate their thoughts and ideas through discussion, reading and writing. Finally, *Voices Reading* aims to connect students’ classroom learning to the real world, in order to address learners’ academic, social, and emotional needs, and to encourage them to become caring citizens (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a). The curriculum intends to accomplish these goals through the integration of the instructional read aloud, which as referenced previously, provides a foundation for the basal reading series, as well as an on explicit emphasis on reading skills instruction, differentiated instruction which meets the needs of all types of learners who have varying needs, in whole group and small group settings, formal and informal
literacy assessments which guide the teacher’s instruction, a definitive emphasis on vocabulary and oral language development, as well as a guided focus on meeting the needs of English language learners (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a).

The instructional read aloud. The teacher is guided through her literacy instruction using a Teacher Guide, which serves as a curriculum map which provides the teacher support as she/he instructs students in comprehensive literacy development, as well as character development, within the designated a designated literacy block of instructional time. The guide offers a weekly planning overview for the teacher, as well as a daily plan which addresses standards-based skills which are clearly identified and used to guide reading instruction. The teacher is instructed to begin each week, using the teacher guide, by reading the instructional read aloud, focusing on a three part framework for text reading, including pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading. Before beginning the reading of the text, the teacher is advised to build on the students’ background surrounding the story, and to relate that to the students’ own lives. In addition, the teacher is advised to preview the text, and talk about the author and illustrator, as well as provide opportunities for the students to look at view and discuss the illustrations, as well as to make predictions about the story. He/she is also guided to set a purpose for reading, and to remind the students of the central questions which guide the theme. Finally, it is also important to note that the curriculum places a strong emphasis on vocabulary instruction prior to the text reading (2005 a; b), and provides students the opportunity to engage with new words, as well as build a rich representation of them as they encounter them in the text, connecting them to words they already know through their prior knowledge (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). The teacher is instructed to
introduce the students to both listening and speaking vocabulary, which are new words that are encountered in the text, as well as character development vocabulary, which are new words that are integrated throughout the theme that relate directly to the central question, but can be discussed in relation to the text—and aid in students’ understanding of the stories they read. Based upon the work of Beck and colleagues (2002), regarding vocabulary instruction, the vocabulary words introduced in Voices Reading are described high frequency words with high utility for mature language users and are most likely encountered across a large variety of academic domains. By creating this deeper understanding of these words, students have the opportunity to build rich a representation of them and connect them to other vocabulary that they already know well and utilize on a daily basis (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b).

During the reading of the instructional read aloud, the teacher is also led to guide students in discussions which allow them to connect the text to themselves, as well as their classmates, known as text-to-self connections, and connections to other texts, known as text-to-text connections. More specifically, the curriculum fosters students’ engagement with text by encouraging the teacher to ask students questions about the rich, multicultural literature they are reading, not just after it has been read, but also during; it also encourages students to ask questions of each other, and to provide their thoughts and opinions regarding their classmates’ interjections. In addition, the curriculum encourages the teacher to follow up on student responses, through further elaboration and probing, so that they are motivated to analyze what they read more deeply and engage in “nuanced interpretations and sophisticated perspective taking” (p., 90, Zaner-Bloser, 2005a). Many of the questions emphasized by the curriculum focus on the students making personal
connections with the literature that they read, through text to self and text to world connections, in order to foster a deeper engagement with the literature. The curriculum argues that the most compelling reasons for students to read are the challenges, as well as opportunities, that they experience reflective of their social relationships. As such, it focuses on embedding the best practices of literacy instruction through the use of multicultural read aloud lessons, which compel and motivate students to read. Through these lessons, students are provided the opportunity to connect to text in a deeper, more personal way, as they think about human relationships and social development.

As an important part of read aloud instruction, the teacher is also advised to read the read aloud book to the students text several times, as multiple readings of the text are an important part of the curriculum, and supported by research (McGee and Schickedanz, 2007). Across several days of reading the same book, and interacting with that book in different ways by focusing on varying literacy skills, children have the opportunity to engage in the reading experience in a more active manner. Reflective of this, during the second reading of the Voices text, the teacher has the opportunity to revisit the new vocabulary introduced, as well to delve more deeply in to comprehension building activities, including critical thinking skills, text structure, and perspective taking. Finally, at the end of the week, the teacher is instructed to do one last implementation of the instructional read aloud, during which he/she revisits the central questions of the theme, as well as other comprehension questions in relation to the text that help them synthesize their ideas around the reading and better conceptualize their understanding of the story. This reading can also be done utilizing the read aloud CD. Furthermore, the teacher is encouraged at this time to revisit the perspective goal for the year, and provide
opportunities to discuss this goal in relation to the text read. Following this discussion, the teacher can also engage students in additional extension activities provided in the students’ skills practice and instructional support workbooks, such as interactive writing sessions, which allow students to engage in thinking about the central theme and guiding questions, in relation to the read aloud, even further (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b).

Study Participants

The students. This case study focuses on a first grade classroom in the six-week summer academic program which took place in 2011. Participants in the study were a first grade teacher and her 25 students. Based upon the most current data available from the 2006-2007 academic year of the feeder school where the program was located, 47% of the students were male and 53% were female. 94% of the school’s population was black, primarily African American, and 3% were Hispanic. In addition, 0.6% of the population is identified as limited English proficient. 94% percent of the student body, which came from the main feeder school, was reported to come from low socio-economic backgrounds based on their qualification for the free or reduced lunch program. Enrollment in the program during the 2009-2010 school year began with approximately 75-80 students. During the summer program, an enrollment of 232 was reached. Throughout the year, the majority of students (n=212) participating in the program came from the nearby feeder school. The majority of participating students (54%) came from Pre-Kindergarten, first and second grades. 47% were male and 53% were female, and 94% were black, 6% Hispanic. 5% of students were classified as English speakers of other languages (ESOL), 3% were classified as students eligible to receive Exceptional Education and Student services (ESE), and 1% of the student population qualified for
Speech and Language services (Bessell et al., 2011). Participation during the 2010-2011 academic year was approximately 183 students. Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first and second grades consisted of mostly female students, while students in third, fourth, and fifth grades were mostly male. First grade, specifically, was 37% male and 63% female. Summer demographic information is not available for the 2010-2011 academic year (Bessell et al., 2011).

Student results from state literacy assessments given to participating students were made available to the program. These assessments screened students for various reading skills. Performance on these various tasks is used to aid in determining whether a student will be likely to perform either at or above grade level in reading by the end of the academic year (Florida Center for Reading Instruction, 2010). According to 2010-2011 data, most Kindergarten and first grade students in the program scored an 85% or higher on the reading comprehension test, showing that they had an 85% or better probability of grade-level or above performance on an end-of-year standardized literacy test. The majority of Kindergarten, first, and second grade students (53%) received vocabulary percentile rank scores between 19 and 50 on this assessment, indicating that remediation was necessary in order to increase these students’ probability of student success on the year-end standardized literacy test. The overall probability of reading success (PRS) score was the highest for students in Kindergarten, at 85%, and decreased for students in each subsequent grade level. Across all grade levels, nearly half of the participating students (47%) with available data obtained a PRS score of 30% or below, indicating that these students have a 30% chance of scoring at or above the 40th percentile on the reading portions of year-end state achievement tests. Furthermore, scores between
16% and 84% are identified as being at moderate risk for developing future reading problems (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2009).

Students with scores <15% are identified as at high-risk for developing future reading problems, scores between 16% and 84% are at moderate risk, and >84% are at low risk. Subsequent to the administration of the Broad Screen, students who are at moderate or high risk are placed into various tasks within the Broad Diagnostic and Targeted Diagnostic Inventories. The technical adequacy of the FAIR has been previously reported (Buros Center for Testing, 2010; Florida Department of Education, 2009), which pertain to the psychometrics of the individual tasks, and predictive validity specific to the alignment of the Broad Screen to the Stanford Achievement Test.

The teacher. The teacher of the class that I observed and interviewed for my research is female and African American. She is fully certified to teach in the state of Florida and a veteran teacher of the district where she was employed full-time as a sixth/seventh grade teacher during the regular school year at the time I completed my study. She also had been teaching in the after-school and summer academic program for three years when I began my data collection. She has a master’s degree in education, and is a native of Florida, having completed her education at two local universities in the area. She was commended multiple times for being a great teacher by her teacher colleagues in the program during the time that I was involved with the program as a graduate assistant, as she had great enthusiasm for teaching, which was evidenced in her dedication both to the program and the students and community it served, as well as her willingness to learn more about the Voices Reading curriculum and to participate in my research. She strongly supported the implementation of the curriculum as part of the
program, and felt it offered students the opportunity to engage in literacy instruction in a unique and rewarding way not offered during the regular school day. She also felt the read aloud experience provided an especially important opportunity for the young, emerging readers that she had in her classroom to be introduced to literature and to engage in dialogue about that literature. Despite her enthusiasm and support for the curriculum, however, she was not familiar with how to conduct a read aloud with students, as is evidenced in the following quote which emanated from an interview that I had with her during my data collection:

Okay. Uh, first, um, I have to say that we… this would be during my first exposure to the read aloud. Even though in a regular classroom, uh, you know, like at middle school level, a read aloud is good, but I don’t really use read aloud a whole lot, uh, when I was teaching sixth grade, because I found that because of the time that we had in the classroom I didn’t use it.

In addition, while the teachers serving as instructors in this program received professional development in the implementation of the Voices Reading curriculum several times throughout the duration of the program, it is important to note that ongoing support in the classroom setting was often limited, due to administrative and programming constraints. Student attendance and participation also fluctuated throughout the summer weeks of the program, which made it difficult for the teachers’ to establish consistency in terms of their instruction, as well as classroom management. Thus, much more time was often spent on issues of classroom management, at the expense of instruction. Furthermore, the schedule often changed during the summer school day, as well, due to unplanned special events that took place sporadically, and last-minute programming changes, which sometimes prevented the teachers from being able to integrate a full two-hour literacy block on a daily basis as they implemented the
reading curriculum. As a result, implementation of *Voices Reading* was affected adversely, as teachers often felt that had to spend more time focusing on integrating new students into their classes, classroom management responsibilities, as well as other administrative tasks deemed important by the program.

**Research Design**

A qualitative research design, utilizing ethnographic methods, which I discuss in subsequent paragraphs, and employing case study research, was used to carry out the data collection portion of this study. Case study research involves the study of a particular issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system, or context. It may involve an individual, several individuals, a program, or a particular event or activity. The case study approach allows the researcher to explore a case over a period of time, through detailed as well as in-depth data collection, which includes multiple sources of data collection, allowing for a case description which reports case-based themes. It is an appropriate approach to the research question when the researcher has a clearly identifiable case within a boundary, and seeks to provide an in-depth analysis and understanding of that particular case (Creswell, 2006). Reflective of this, I chose to focus on one particular first grade teacher and her classroom practices during read aloud instruction in the after school program I describe above, and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) permissions to conduct my research in this setting. My study focused on this particular teacher and her classroom, first and foremost, because she worked with first grade students, and my desire in this research study, as referenced extensively, is to observe what happens during read aloud instruction with this particular group of school-aged, young, emergent readers, in a community such as the one
discussed. I also chose this particular teacher because she is extremely passionate about
her teaching, as well as the children she teaches, and is very committed to their academic
success. Her colleagues in the program spoke highly of her teaching practices during her
time at the program, as referenced previously. In addition, we developed a close working
relationship during my time as a graduate assistant, and she had always been extremely
open to discussing her classroom teaching with me. Finally, she had the longest tenure of
all the teachers employed at the program, since the initiation of its partnership with
aforementioned research university in 2009. Thus, she was most familiar with the
program, as well as the *Voices Reading* curriculum.

**Data collection.** Reflective of these ideas, and utilizing ethnographic research
methods (Angrosino, 2005; Creswell, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), I engaged in
what Creswell (2006) defines as purposeful, or purposive, sampling. This type of
sampling means that the researcher selects specific individuals and/or sites for study that
he or she knows will provide greater information that explains the research problem and
central idea being studied. In this type of sampling, it is important that the researcher
thinks about who or what should be sampled, how many samplings should be carried out,
as well as what form the sampling will take place. Furthermore, because of the in-depth,
focused nature of qualitative research which employs ethnographic research methods,
prolonged engagement in the research site is integral to the success of the process.
Researchers must have the opportunity to spend an extended amount of time immersed in
the site locations of their studies, gaining access and establishing a rapport with each of
the study participants (Creswell, 2006), as I did through my experiences working as a
graduate assistant with this program described in prior paragraphs.
Continuing to employ methods reflective of ethnographic research (Angrosino, 2005; Creswell, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), I conducted formal observations of the first grade teacher’s classroom instruction as she conducted the instructional read aloud, utilizing a video camera so that I could record each lesson and later transcribe them. As such, I engaged in research which was grounded in the experiences of the researcher in a naturalistic setting, such as a classroom, versus a manipulated or controlled environment, as supported by Gold (as cited in Angrosino, 2005), Creswell (2006), and Denzin and Lincoln (2005). Following the observations, I also had the opportunity to conduct two, semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the teacher, during the fall of 2011, as well in the spring of 2012. A semi-structured interview, while formalized with a limited set of questions, is also flexible, allowing for the possibility of new questions to be integrated during the interview, as a result of how the interviewee might respond. Using the ethnographic research of Ladson-Billings (1994) to inform my work, I also included a collective interpretation aspect to my research. Reflective of this, I had the first grade teacher view videos of her teaching with me, as we talked about what specific strategies she employed, or language they used, during their instruction during the summer of 2012.

As such, data collected (see Table 3.2) as part of my research study consists of transcripts of seven video-taped classroom observations, focusing on the participating teacher as she implemented a *Voices Reading* read aloud lesson during literacy instruction, which I conducted during the 2011 summer academic program. Each read aloud lesson lasted about 30-90 minutes and approximately 15-20 students were present for each session, and they were randomly chosen throughout the six-week program. Some lessons reflect preliminary readings of the literature, while others are subsequent,
as the *Voices Reading* curriculum encourages multiple readings of the same read aloud book over the course of a week (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b), as previously highlighted. Furthermore, because the curriculum, again, places such a strong emphasis on vocabulary instruction prior to the text reading, I consider the vocabulary instruction carried out by the teacher as part of the read aloud lesson and part of the talk about text by the teacher and students. Data collected also includes transcripts from the two open-ended, semi-structured tape-recorded interviews (Patton, 2001) conducted with the teacher during the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, addressing her personal and teaching background, philosophy of teaching, as well her thoughts regarding literacy instruction in this particular setting and in general, as well as transcripts from the two tape-recorded collaborative interpretation and analysis interviews regarding the video observations (Ladson-Billings, 1994) conducted during the spring and summer of 2012, to better understand the teacher’s perceptions of her practices during literacy instruction. Data also includes the Theme I teacher guide, curriculum overview, and research-based publication from *Voices Reading*, as well as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant narrative and the Education Evaluation Team Summative and Formative reports conducted on the academic program between 2009 and 2011. The multiple sources of data collection described support the case study approach (Creswell, 2006), as well as the triangulation of data (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Flick, 2002, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which encourages multi-methods and multiple perspectives in qualitative research. Table 2 also outlines how the data collection methods inform the research question.
### Table 3.2

**Data Supporting Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts of Classroom Observations</td>
<td>Seven videos of classroom observations of first grade teacher conducting read aloud lessons over six-week academic summer program (from Summer 2011); books include <em>My Name Is Yoon</em> (Recorvitz, 2003); <em>Pablo’s Tree</em> (Mora, 1994); and <em>All the Colors We Are</em> (Kissinger, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts Open-Ended Interviews</td>
<td>Two semi-structured, open-ended interviews with first grade teacher on teaching philosophy, instructional practices, reading literacy instructional practices (from Fall 2011 &amp; Spring 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts of Collaborative Interviews</td>
<td>Two collaborative/collaborative interviews with first grade teacher, based upon two video-taped read aloud lessons (from Fall 2011; Spring and Summer, 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Voices Reading</em> Curricular Materials</td>
<td>First grade teacher curriculum guide for Theme I: (Identity Awareness); curriculum overview guide; research-based publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Documents Describing Program/Setting</td>
<td>21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant narrative and the Education Evaluation Team Summative and Formative reports conducted on the academic program between 2009 and 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Methods of analysis.** A qualitative research design was used to carry out the analysis of data in this case study. I began by uploading the transcripts of the video-taped observations into Atlas.ti, an analytic software which supports the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, graphical, audio or video data. Then, I analyzed the data using
thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clark, 2006; O'Leary, 2009), a method of qualitative research analysis which allows for the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns, or themes (Braun & Clark, 2006), within data, in order to interpret various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). Using this type of analysis, I analyzed data from these transcripts through a preliminary series of open codes, based upon idea units (Strauss, 1987), which are then grouped into families, or categories, and later, iterative comprehensive and descriptive, categorical themes which cut across these families and which embrace the primary thoughts and ideas emanating from the data.

The purpose of the emerging descriptive, categorical themes is to provide a more detailed analysis of how the teacher establishes an APS as she intends to mediate students’ text engagement during read aloud instruction. As such, I followed the five steps for thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) in carrying out my research. These are as follows: (a) become familiar with the data; (b) generate initial codes; (c) search for themes using codes; (d) review themes, in relation to original coding scheme; (e) develop a thematic map of the analysis; (f) define and name themes; and (g) produce the final report or write-up, showing a final analysis of sample extracts of data, relating back to the research question.

A highly involved process which is often iterative in nature, I worked closely with the data on multiple occasions at length to make comparisons of codes and relationships between them, in order to develop the most representative descriptive, categorical themes which help draw conclusions. This is represented in what Charmaz (2010) describes as constant comparative analysis, and leads to an increasingly abstract understanding of the phenomena being studied as part of the data. This type of analysis allows the researcher
to establish analytic distinctions and make comparisons at each level of the research process (Glaser and Strauss, as cited in Charmaz, 2010). Although guided by research question and a review of literature, instead of imposing a preconceived coding scheme on the data, which comes from the literature or already existing theory, I allowed the codes and categories to emerge organically from the data by developing a coding scheme which signifies key concepts and ideas, a process defined as exploratory analysis by Guest, McQueen, & Namey (2012), representing a form of thematic analysis which is data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, I was careful to check those codes as they developed, always referring back to the data (Creswell, 2006).

More specifically, I began my analysis with multiple readings of the transcripts of the videotaped observations. From there, preliminary coding of the data took place, as I searched for idea units (Strauss, 1987), represented by a sentence, several sentences or even a paragraph (Straus & Corbin, 1998), guided by my research question. During the open coding of the observations (See Appendix A, Figure 6.1), I began to develop the basis for a coding scheme, based upon three moves, or parts, of the read aloud lesson: before reading, during reading, and after text reading discussions and dialogue, as described by Beck and colleagues (1997). As such, I read and sifted through a portion of data (two out of seven total lessons) and looked for general ideas, through open codes, based upon instances representing the construct of APS. The construct of APS, as will be referenced again in the subsequent chapter, suggests that students are actively involved in the reading process, as they create meaning, with the support of their teacher, surrounding the text, reflective of constructivist theory. While I discuss this further in the subsequent chapter, this construct reflects the idea that students, with the help and guidance of the
teacher, are interactively engaged in conversation regarding text reading with the purpose of creating a shared, co-constructed understanding of what is being read (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Sipe, 2008; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Teale & Martinez, 1996; Wiseman, 2011).

Following, I looked more closely at what units of analysis I wanted to use to define the data, and defined these units (See Appendix A, Figure 6.2). These units are as follows:  

a) talk involving the teacher and multiple students, talk involving the teacher and individual students, and talk involving the teacher only;  

b) talk about text or not about text;  

c) talk before, during or after the reading aloud lesson, and  

d) type/unit of interaction, reflective of either APS. Subsequently, I then coded all seven lessons using these different units of analysis, establishing agreement at greater than 80% with my second coder, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). Based upon the initial open coding document, as well as the subsequent refined coding document defining my units of analysis, I then developed my coding scheme further to include all aspects important to my final analysis, looking more deeply at all of the different types of interactions in the transcripts that were reflective of APS as represented in the initial coding scheme, and then refining the coding document one last time to represent this. (At this point in the coding process, I only focused on those portions of the transcripts pertaining to talk about the text, as opposed to talk concerning classroom management or other administrative affairs in the classroom. As such, all transcripts only contain talk that is related to instruction; all other talk is deleted.) Reflective of this, a code was structured in the following manner: BEFORE/DURING/AFTER TEXT READING_UNIT of INTERACTION_ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURE_CODE NAME,
REFLECTIVE OF IDEA UNITS in OPEN CODING (e.g.: B_APS_Teacher & Group of Students_Teacher and students engage in ongoing dialogue and exchange). Based upon this new schema, I created a coding document (See Appendix A, Figure 6.3) representative of these final codes, to be used by the second coder and me, which we used to code all seven lessons again. As we coded, we combined various codes, in order to more accurately define what was happening in the data. As such, I was mindful of the fact that my coding scheme should remain flexible throughout, in order to accommodate any new insights or ideas that might emerge during the coding process, reflective of constant comparative analysis, which argues that data must be constantly revisited throughout the analysis process (Charmaz, 2010). During this final step of coding, we established agreement once again at greater than 80%. Based upon the analysis completed during this step of coding, I grouped these codes into a series of families, or categorical themes. After these descriptive, categorical themes were created, I reviewed and refined them to make sure they worked in relation to the entire data set, working deductively, to see whether a coherent pattern was forming from the analysis. At the end of this step, I developed a rational understanding of the different descriptive, categorical themes that emerged, how they fit together, as well as the overall story they told about the data. Creating a thematic map (Braun & Clark, 2006), also referred to as a data analysis map, which outlines the themes and is discussed in Chapter 4, was helpful in this step of the process. This led to further refinement surrounding the themes, as well as which specific codes from my coding process on which I wanted to focus in my analysis, which reflect two aspects of the teacher’s instruction: a) the type of interactions she engages in with her students (ToI); and b) the content of these interactions (CoI). I then refined the
data analysis map once more, reflective of these themes, choosing to focus on those codes only which are most reflective the teacher’s implementation of APS and involved interaction between the teacher and individual students or multiple students, as I discussed above. This then precipitated the write-up of the final findings and discussion based upon my analysis, presented in Chapters 4 and 5. These findings and discussion offer an analysis of how the teacher encourages APS during her read aloud instruction, and how the curriculum and context support this, using excerpts of the data transcripts as exemplars.

Key issues associated with qualitative research. During my data collection and coding, I was cognizant of important terms associated with exemplary qualitative research, including rigor (Creswell, 2006) and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), which are associated with the ideas of reliability and validity in research. In order to add to the rigor and trustworthiness of the study (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007), I utilized multiple sources of data, including observations, open-ended interviews, collaborative interviews, *Voices Reading* curriculum materials, and other key documents describing the program. Furthermore, I utilized an inductive-deductive process during my research. As such, I worked inductively to look for patterns in the data, organizing it into increasingly more abstract units of information, reflected in the themes I described through thematic analysis. I also used deductive thinking to check those themes as they developed, always referring back to the data in the process (Creswell, 2006).

In order to address the issue of validity, as well as reliability, I solicited the assistance of an additional coder to code the data transcripts, as I referenced previously,
engaging in what Creswell (2006) describes as a process which enables “the stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets” (p. 210). As such, we established a process of consensus surrounding coding, which further defined and verified the meaning of the emerging codes, and how they revealed themselves during the coding process. Furthermore, to achieve the goal of reliability, we met to discuss whether we assigned the same code to a particular idea unit in the transcripts throughout the coding process, in order to calculate the percentage of agreement among the two of us on the transcripts at 80%. As we coded, we continued to combine and alter the codes, in order to most accurately reflect what was happening in the data.
Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings of my study. The research question guiding this study asks how the teacher promotes an APS during the multicultural read aloud lesson to support students’ engagement with text, and how this aspect of her teaching is guided by the curriculum and program context. As discussed previously, an APS during read aloud instruction should create a space in the classroom where meaning is constructed by the teacher and the students in a collaborative manner through their interactions about the text (Wiseman, 2011). Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory suggests that this type of instruction provides a classroom environment that is highly social and reflective of learners’ personal lives, giving them the opportunity to engage with one another and the teacher, through meaningful activities where talk is abundant but not rigidly controlled by the teacher (Sipe, 2008).

Codes Used During Analysis

As stated in Chapter 3, I chose to focus my analysis on the categorical, thematic codes that reflect both the type of interactions (ToI) and content of interactions (CoI) between the teacher and students, or the teacher and an individual student. The data analysis map below (see Figure 4.1) highlights these two themes, ToI and CoI, the codes they encompass, and how these codes co-occur during read aloud instruction, before, during and after the text reading. The ToI codes shown in the map describe the process taking place within the exchanges during the read aloud lesson between the teacher and multiple students or the teacher and individual students, and how the talk during these exchanges is distributed. This theme encompasses the following codes: a) teacher and students engage in ongoing dialogue or exchange; b) students engage in ongoing dialogue
or exchange with each other; c) students interject response or comment without prompting; d) teacher and students engage in call and response; and e) teacher elaborates or probes surrounding questions. The CoI codes that I highlight describe the content, or what is being talked about, that takes place during the exchanges between the teacher and multiple students or the teacher and individual students. This theme encompasses the following codes: a) teacher asks factual/recall questions; b) teacher asks inferential questions; c) teacher asks opinion/evaluative questions; d) teacher and students discuss key literacy concepts; and e) teacher and students discuss key vocabulary. A description and exemplar of these codes can be found in Appendix B, Figures 6.4 and 6.5.

Figure 4.1

Data Analysis Map: Type (ToI) and Content (CoI) of Interactions Co-Occurring During Read Aloud Instruction Before, During and After Text Reading
Teacher and Student Talk Before, During and After the Read Aloud

The first graph (see Figure 4.2) shows the frequency of instances of teacher and student talk (including multiple students and individual students), student to student talk, and teacher talk only during instruction, before, during and after the text reading. As shown, there is an overwhelming number of instances of teacher and student talk, as these instances occur 1.5 times more often (150% more) than teacher only talk, primarily before and during instruction. Furthermore, instances in which the teacher talks without any student involvement occur in less than 50% of the lesson, primarily before and during the read aloud. In addition, although it does not occur often, there are a limited number of instances, before and after the text reading, when the students engage ‘student-to-student’ interactions, without the involvement of the teacher.
Figure 4.2

Teacher and Student Talk, Student to Student Talk, and Teacher Only Talk Before, During and After Read Aloud, based upon Type of Interaction (ToI) Codes

**Type of Interactions (ToI) Before, During and After the Read Aloud between Teacher and Multiple Students and Teacher and Individual Students**

Figure 4.3 shows the frequency of ToI codes, before, during and after the text reading, between the teacher and multiple students, and the teacher and individual students. The graph shows that most of the interactions pertain to the teacher probing or elaborating surrounding questions during instruction, either in dialogue with multiple students (112 total instances) or individual students (281 total instances), as these exchanges occur 25% more often than all of the other exchanges combined shown in the graph; furthermore most of the talk during these exchanges takes place either before or during the read aloud. The next most frequently occurring ToI interaction pertains to those exchanges that involve the teacher and students engaging in ongoing dialogue or exchange, with either multiple students (79 total instances) or individual students (111 total instances); furthermore, most of the talk during these exchanges, again, takes place before or during the read aloud. Additional ToI exchanges which take place less frequently, but are still important in supporting APS, involve the teacher and student or multiple students engaging in call and response, which happens primarily before the text reading, mostly with multiple students (42 total instances), as opposed to individual students (26 total instances); followed by individual students (15 total instances) and multiple students (38 total instances) interjecting responses during dialogue with the teacher without prompting, primarily before and during the lesson. Finally, although it
does not occur often, there are also several instances (4 total instances), before and after text reading, when the students engage in ‘student-to-student’ interactions.

Figure 4.3

Frequency of Type of Interaction (ToI) Codes, Before, During and After Read Aloud, Between Teacher and Multiple Students and Teacher and Individual Students

Note:

B=Before; D=During; A=After  
T & Ss=Teacher and Multiple Students; T & S=Teacher and Student
Content of Interactions (CoI) Before, During and After the Read Aloud between Teacher and Multiple Students and Teacher and Individual Students

Figure 4.4 shows the frequency of CoI codes, before, during and after the read aloud, between the teacher and multiple students, and the teacher and individual students. The graph emphasizes that most of the talk taking place focuses on content related to the teacher’s integration of questions with individual students (349 total instances) or multiple students (208 total instances). Reflective of this, 3.03 times (303%) more instances of questioning occur as opposed to all other interactions involving content supporting APS. The teacher integrates questioning which involves inferential interrogations with individual students (68 total instances) and multiple students (52 total instances), opinion/evaluative interrogations with individual students (77 total instances) and multiple students (44 total instances), and factual/recall interrogations with individual students (191 total instances) and multiple students (100 total instances). Most of the questions are posed during the text reading, and more questions, overall, reflect factual/recall interrogations, as these occur 21% more often than any other type of question. There is also focus on key vocabulary with multiple students (72 total instances) and individual students (35 total instances), which primarily takes place before the text reading. In addition, there are a limited number of instances that occur with multiple students (17 total) and individual students (8 total), primarily during the text reading, which focus on the discussion of key literacy concepts in relation to the text reading. Finally, it is important to note that there is more content related to discussion surrounding higher order thinking, including open-ended inferential or opinion/evaluative questioning and talk about key vocabulary or key literacy concepts, as opposed to
factual/recall questioning, as these areas of content occur 372 total instances, as opposed to 291 total instances of factual/recall questioning. As such, this higher order thinking content occurs 28% more often than factual/recall questioning.

![Content of Interactions (CoI) Codes](image)

**Figure 4.4**

Frequency of Content of Interaction (CoI) Codes, Before, During and After Read Aloud between Teacher and Students and Teacher and Individual Students

*Note: B=Before; D=During; A=After
T & S=Teacher and Student; T & Ss=Teacher and Multiple Students*
Students Engage in Ongoing Dialogue or Exchange, and Students Engage in Ongoing Dialogue or Exchange with Each Other, Supporting Ongoing, Sustained Conversations

There are parts of the read aloud lesson when the teacher and students engage in ongoing dialogue and exchange (ToI code), or the students engage in ongoing dialogue and exchange with each other (ToI code), repeatedly, which results in segments of continuous, sustained conversation about the text within the read aloud lesson (See Figure 4.5). This cycle occurs over and over again, throughout the read aloud lessons, as Hoffman (2011) also references in her work on interactive read alouds, creating interactive, continuous, sustained conversations between the teacher and students that are aimed at creating a shared meaning around a particular aspect of the text as part of the read aloud lesson, either before, during or after the story reading, for a total of 43 instances. These sustained conversations end when the coconstructed meaning created provides sufficient clarity for the students about the text, and the teacher summarizes or acknowledges that meaning, before moving onto another topic of discussion. Furthermore, there are also specific CoI codes and ToI codes, referenced in Figures 4.3 and 4.4, which characterize these sustained, ongoing conversations, and are as follows: a) the integration of initial open-ended questions (167 total instances), including inferential questions and opinion evaluative questions (CoI codes), followed up by additional follow-up probing as well as elaboration beyond the text (ToI code) by the teacher (258 total instances); and b) the welcoming of students’ interjections (ToI code) based upon their thoughts and ideas about the text, despite the fact that they may not be prompted by teacher’s interrogations (35 total instances). These specific CoI and ToI within these continuous, sustained conversations account for about 66% of the total
number of these instances within the entire read aloud lesson. As such, they occur two-thirds more often during these portions of the lesson, as opposed to other parts.

Figure 4.5

Frequency of Instances of Continuous, Sustained Dialogue During Read Aloud, as Well as Open-Ended Questions, Probing and Elaboration, and Interjections Within Those Instances

Integration of Open Ended Questions, Followed by Probing and Elaboration; Welcoming of Student Interjections

One way in which continuous, sustained dialogue, supporting APS, is precipitated is through the integration of initial open-ended questions, followed by follow-up questions and probing and elaboration by the instructor, as referenced in the prior
paragraph and Figure 5. These initial questions take the form of inferential or opinion/evaluative interrogations, reflective of CoI coding, between the teacher and students, or the teacher and an individual student, and are present throughout the read aloud lesson, before, during and after text reading. Inferential questions require the reader to combine prior knowledge and experience with information from the text to read between the lines and infer what the author has not directly stated, while opinion/evaluative questions require students to give their thoughts and opinions regarding the text discussion, based upon their own personal beliefs. By soliciting information through this type of open-ended questioning, the teacher prompts an exchange which focuses on meaning creation through the understanding of the text. Another way that the teacher also supports this continuous, sustained dialogue when she continues to follow up her questions with additional probing, or follow-up questioning, as well as elaborations, reflective of ToI coding. This type of probing can take the form of elaboration or clarification questions, and usually follow an initial response by a student (Fisher & Frey, 2010). Sometimes the probing also takes the form of a restatement of the initial question. It is important to note that the teacher’s probing and elaboration follows often her recognition and validation of the students’ initial responses, thus providing her an opportunity to build upon their answers in order to continue to explore the text more deeply, to create meaning. Furthermore, when the teacher extends her teaching in order to scaffold the students’ learning experience and collaboratively co-construct meaning, by elaborating during dialogue and discussion, continuous, sustained dialogue, supporting APS, also occurs in the lessons. Extending, describes Wiseman (2011), “is where the teacher takes what the students know and guides them to a deeper meaning, sometimes
by focusing on an important theme or idea that might not have been discussed by simply facilitating the students’ comments” (p. 436). The teacher in this study does this by elaborating beyond the text, providing additional examples for the students, in order to provide a greater understanding for the students of what is being read and discussed.

Finally, another way in which continuous, sustained dialogue, supporting APS, is precipitated is when the teacher welcomes interjections from students, which are unsolicited, and yet contribute to the understanding that she and the class create together about the read aloud text. While questioning and probing, described above, are geared purposefully at seeking responses from students, with an intended focus of create a greater understanding of the story, interjections are usually spontaneous comments which represent children’s thoughts or opinions of the text which they are reading and discussing. They represent students’ attempts to engage more actively as they are reading, and to participate during text discussion, without purposefully being prompted by the teacher. They also reflect children’s attempts to draw the story to themselves, and see how it mirrors their lives. When the teacher welcomes these interjections, reflective of deeper more profound connections to text, students begin to freely use whatever knowledge they have from their backgrounds and prior experiences to make literary meaning, as Sipe (2008) describes.

Below I provide an analysis of exemplars from the lesson transcripts from before, during and after the read aloud lesson, exemplifying the integration of these types of open-ended questions, succeeded by follow-up probing and elaborations, as well as the welcoming of student interjections, and how they contribute to ongoing, sustained conversations, in support of APS. I also highlight how the curriculum, as well as the
program context, supports the teacher during instruction. (Please note that all names within exemplars have been changed to ensure the confidentiality of the teacher and students.)

**Discussion of Exemplars Representing the Integration of Open-Ended Questions, followed by Probing and Elaboration, Which Supports Continuous, Sustained Conversation**

The first example, which represents the teacher’s implementation of open-ended questions, followed by probing and elaboration, takes place as part of the first read aloud of *Pablo’s Tree* (Mora, 1994), during the text reading, Lesson 6. This fictional text, as described previously, is about a young boy named Pablo who celebrates his adoption each year by decorating a tree that his grandfather gave him to welcome him into his new family and commemorate his adoption. The curriculum, again, places a strong emphasis on engaging the students in discussion during the text reading as the text is being read by the teacher and supports the teacher as she does this. Some of the questions emphasized by *Voices Reading* also place an emphasis on various literacy skills to help reinforce comprehension, such as text structure, character, setting, comparing and contrasting, figurative language, text features, as well as cause and effect (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). I highlight this particular exemplar because the teacher often focused on teaching different literacy skills during the read aloud lesson as she was guided and supported by the curriculum, represented by the CoI code discussed above. In the case of this particular read aloud, the curriculum encourages the teacher to focus on the literacy concept of text structure, as it asks students to consider the different elements of the plot from the beginning to the end of the text. In the example below, the teacher asks inferential questions, prompting dialogue with several individual students, encouraging them to
think about a series of events in the story that lead up to the climax, when Pablo gets to see how his tree is decorated that particular year by his grandfather. The teacher also places a particular emphasis on aspects of character and setting in the exemplar, comprehension skills emphasized in prior read alouds (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b) as she encourages the students to make inferences about why Pablo might act as he does in this part of the text, and where the conversation takes place and why.

The exemplar begins as the teacher engages in ongoing dialogue and exchange with an individual student Student 1, by asking him an inferential question regarding how Pablo expects his tree to look that year when he and his mother visit his grandfather (100). When Student 1 responds that Pablo wants to see his tree be beautiful and decorated (101), the teacher acknowledges this response, but then continues to probe further, by integrating an elaboration follow-up question regarding what he is trying to get his mother to do on their way to visit Pablo’s grandfather directed towards the whole class (102). Student 2 responds that Pablo is trying to get his mother to go to his grandfather’s house (103). The teacher then acknowledges Student 2’s answer, and elaborates on it, providing additional information for the students regarding this inference. Following, she continues to probe further asks an elaboration follow up question (104) as to why Pablo asks questions of his mother about his tree, directed at the students again. When the Student 3 responds (105), the teacher elaborates on his inference further (106), making her question more comprehensible through a clarification follow-up question. The exchange ends as Student 4 answers the question, explaining that Pablo wanted to know how his grandfather decorated the tree, and the teacher acknowledges the statement, and elaborates on it for the students, clarifying the
coconstructed meaning surrounding the text exemplified in this ongoing, sustained conversation.

100 Teacher: Now, what happened here? Remember I asked a question: “What do you think Lito expect his tree to look like?” Student 1, what is Lito expecting this tree to look like when he gets to his – oh, not Lito, I’m sorry. Pablo. What is Pablo expecting his tree to look like when he gets to Lito’s house?

101 Student 1: He wants it to be beautiful and decorated.

102 Teacher: He wants it to be beautiful and decorated, and he’s gonna do what? While he’s driving in the car with Mom to Grandfather’s house, he’s trying to do what with Mom? What he’s trying to get Mom to do? Yes, Student 2?

103 Student 2: Go to grandfather’s house.

104 Teacher: Okay. He’s trying to get Mom to go to his grandfather’s house? That’s where they’re headed in the car. What – he’s asking her, uh, a series of questions or, uh, he’s asking her different questions. Why is he asking her all these questions? Okay? Yes, Student 3.

105 Student 3: Because he wants to see his tree.

106 Teacher: He’s asking the question because he wants to see his tree? Remember, he’s going to Grandfather’s house. So when he gets there, he is going to see the tree. But, what is he trying – what information is he trying to get from his mother about his tree?

Yes, Student 4.
107 Student 4: He’s trying to – he’s trying to – he’s trying to see what’s on his tree.

108 Teacher: What’s on his tree; he wants to know how his grandpa, Lito, decorated his tree, right? Okay.

It is important to note that throughout this example of transcript, reflective of continuous, sustained conversation about the text, the teacher engages in several instances of interactions with individual students reflective of ongoing dialogue and exchange. What prompts this exemplar is the teacher’s integration of an open-ended inferential question which is aimed at soliciting information that is important to understanding the text which is not explicitly stated for the reader, but is important to creating meaning around the text. In this exemplar this question is directed at an individual student. That which sustains the dialogue in this exemplar is the teacher’s ongoing probing, as she searches for further information, in collaboration with the students, regarding the questions Pablo asked his mother about his tree, as well as further elaborations on students’ answers regarding their inferences in reference to this portion of the text. This probing, directed toward individual students, takes the form of elaboration and clarification follow-up questions. It also occurs after the teacher recognizes the students’ initial responses, and builds upon them to continue the conversation, in an attempt to provide more information which might help them as they search for meaning together.

I continue with another example of the teacher’s integration of open-ended questions, followed by probing and elaboration. The example below takes place before
the text reading, between the teacher and a group of students, during an initial reading of *My Name Is Yoon* (Recorvitz, 2003) from Lesson 1. This fictional text is about a young girl named Yoon who has immigrated to the United States from her native country of Korea, and struggles adapting as a new student in her new school. In this interaction, the teacher and students discuss one of the key vocabulary words utilized in the text, “wisdom”, reflective of the CoI code that states that the teacher and students discuss key vocabulary from the text; thus, the purpose of this particular discussion is to establish meaning around this particular word, so that they students are able to understand it when encountered during the text reading. I emphasize this particular exemplar because of the important role that vocabulary instruction, again, has in the curriculum and as such, in the teacher’s lessons, reflective of the CoI codes discussed above. I also emphasize this exemplar to highlight how the teacher’s carries out this vocabulary instruction. In order to support this development of new word knowledge, the curriculum provides the teacher a list of words that are encountered in the story, as well as definitions for these words, and encourages the teacher to introduce them in context before reading the text through the use of sentences, which are also provided. It also encourages the teacher and students to interact more deeply with the vocabulary by discussing them and providing exemplars of each one, using the instructional support materials provided, and using the students’ own personal experiences and prior knowledge as a foundation for discussion of the terms (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). Furthermore, the teacher utilizes her own knowledge and cultural competence to make decisions about the style of discourse that she employs during this vocabulary instruction, in order to further supports students’ engagement.
The beginning of the exemplar begins with an exchange in which the teacher and students engage in ongoing dialogue or discussion, reflective of “call and response”, an additional ToI code mentioned above. Call-and-response is a dominant discourse pattern most often used in African American communities. It is a “spontaneous verbal and non-verbal interaction between speaker and listener in which all of the statements (“calls”) are punctuated by expressions (“responses”) from the listener” (p. 104). The responses serve a variety of purposes during discourse, including affirming or agreeing with the speaker, urging the speaker on, repeating what the speaker has just said, completing the speaker’s statement in response to a request from the speaker, or they sometimes show a strong affirmation of what the speaker has just shared. This style of discourse requires the audience to attend closely to distinguishing attributes of text or otherwise as delivered by the speaker during this discourse pattern. Because of this, call-and-response requests a high level of engagement by those involved. As such, this discourse pattern can be a particularly useful tool for classroom instruction (Smitherman, 1977). It was a type of discourse that was seen frequently throughout the lesson, primarily in relation to vocabulary instruction before the text reading, as referenced in Figure 3.

100 Teacher: All right. Wisdom; let’s read it again. Let’s read it again.

Wisdom.

[All students say the word “wisdom”]

101 Teacher: Good judgment.

[All students say the words “good judgment”]

102 Teacher: In knowing what to do…

[All students say the words “in knowing what to do”]
As the example continues, the teacher continues to engage the students in ongoing dialogue exchange, as they discuss the meaning of the word “wisdom” (103-106), and she asks the group an inferential question regarding its definition (107). She then continues to change her interaction involving ongoing dialogue and exchange to include only one student, Student 1, as she directs her opinion/evaluative towards this individual (109-114).

103 Teacher: Okay. Let’s say that you’re at your street corner, and a car is coming this way and a car that way, and -. So wisdom says that you are going to use good judgment in knowing what to do, right?

104 Students: Yes.

105 Teacher: So you see cars coming out, are you gonna walk out there while the cars are going?

106 Students: No.

107 Teacher: No. Why?

108 Students: Because –

[Crosstalk]

109 Teacher: Okay… Student 1, what would wisdom suggest you do, or – you gotta know what to do at that time? Cars are coming this way; they are coming that way. You want to cross over to the other side. So, wisdom – having wisdom, what would you do? You gotta know what to do at that point…what were you gonna say Student 1. Go ahead and tell me what you were gonna say first.

112 Student1: You’re gonna get hit by a car.
[Crosstalk]

113 Teacher: Okay. What are you going to say again, Student 1?

114 Student 1: You don’t want to get hit by a car.

As the exemplar continues, the teacher recognizes the student’s answer to her opinion/evaluative question (114), but continues to elaborate further, as well as probe for further information, by asking a follow-up clarification question regarding the meaning of “wisdom” to another individual student, Student 2 (115), providing the opportunity for the class to offer a clearer explanation regarding the word’s definition, reflective of their understanding. In response to the second individual student’s answer, the teacher continues to probe further, with an elaboration follow-up question which invites the students to extend their thoughts further regarding the meaning of “wisdom” (117). She then acknowledges the students’ answer, and continues to elaborate further, extending her teaching to provide an additional example of the definition of “wisdom” that the students might be able to connect with personally (119), thus ending the ongoing, sustained conversation as she solidifies the coconstructed meaning of this key vocabulary word from the text.

115 Teacher: Okay. But, wisdom says here, “good judgment”. You gotta use good judgment. You have to decide here while cars are coming in both lanes and you want to get on the other side, so good judgment in knowing what to do. You gotta use good wisdom. You gotta know what to do at that point. What do you think you would do? Student 2?
116 Student 2: I would – I would wait until all the cars passed, and then when it’s a red, I would go across the road.

117 Teacher: Okay. Or suppose if there is no light there. You look both ways – you look what direction first?

118 Students: Left then right…

119 Teacher: Left then right, and then left again. And then if nothing is coming, you cross over. That’s using wisdom. Okay. Here is another example. All right. Your mom is not at home…and your mom said, “I don’t want you touching the stove.” And you saw, “Oh, the stove is on.” Because your mom said, “I don’t want you touching the stove,” because if you reach over, you might burn yourself on the stove, right? All right, so you’re gonna use wisdom at that time. You’re gonna use good judgment on knowing what to do.

Throughout this exemplar of continuous, sustained conversation about the text within the read aloud lesson, the teacher engages in several interactions representative of ongoing dialogue and exchange, both with a group of students, as well as several individual students. What prompts this conversation is the teacher’s integration of an open-ended opinion/evaluative question, which is aimed at soliciting information regarding the meaning of the key vocabulary word “wisdom”. That which sustains the dialogue in this exemplar is the teacher’s ongoing probing, reflected in follow-up elaboration and clarification, as she searches for further information, in collaboration with the students, regarding the word’s meaning. This probing and elaboration, as
mentioned previously, occurs after the teacher recognizes the students’ initial responses, and builds upon them to continue the conversation. It is important to note that read alouds can provide a supportive and important avenue for the instruction of word meanings, if teachers are knowledgeable in the selection of words for teaching, and have a thorough understanding of the role of context (Kindle, 2010). This type of word knowledge is central to students’ comprehension of text and their literacy growth as a whole. As they engage in a sustained, ongoing conversation reflective of this type word knowledge, the teacher relies on the prior knowledge of students, elaborating beyond the curriculum to provide examples of the vocabulary that are familiar to them and that are meaningful to them personally. She is infuses this student knowledge into the conversation when she poses inferential questions, as well as follow-up probes and elaborations, about these situations, so that they can work together collectively to understand the vocabulary word’s definition as they begin to read the text together. Furthermore, the teacher relies on her own cultural competence to engage in a discourse with the students that reflects their cultural backgrounds, represented in call and response. Michaels (1981) and Heath (1983) both reference the discourse styles of African American children in their research, suggesting that this discourse is often recursive in nature and rhythmically chunked, and often differs from the more standard academic discourse of the classroom. Michaels (1981) adds that when a child’s discourse style matches the teacher’s own literate style and expectations for discussion, as in this portion of the lesson, collaboration between the teacher and student is supported, as well as an informal practice which prepares students for the development of a literate discourse style, contributing to what she calls an “oral preparation for literacy”. In contrast, when these discourse styles are not reflective of
each other, collaboration is not supported, which over time can adversely affect a child’s academic performance in school (Michaels, 1981, p. 423).

The next example, reflective of the teacher’s integration of open-ended questions, followed by probing and elaboration, occurs during the text reading, and is from the first reading of *My Name Is Yoon* (Recorvitz, 2003), Lesson 1. I highlight this exemplar because of its emphasis on perspective taking, and encouraging students to connect personally with the text in an explicit way. Reflective of this, the *Voices Reading* curriculum emphasizes the importance of teachers engaging student in dialogue about the text not just before or after text reading, but also during the reading of text. More specifically, the curriculum encourages the students to make text to self connections, and to think about “how events in the book remind them of their own lives” (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b, p. T21). Discussions that the curriculum encourages the teacher to initiate include how students might feel when they are homesick while staying with friends or relatives, or in a new situation, either at school or in a new neighborhood, or what feelings they have when they are laughed at. These types of discussions during interactive read alouds encourage students’ participation in building meaning regarding discussion of text ideas as they read the story. This continuous, sustained conversation about the text includes several exemplars of ongoing dialogue and exchange which revolve around questions that the teacher integrates during the reading of the text, in order to encourage learners to talk about story ideas and connect them as the reading of the text progresses (Beck et al., 1997; Beck & McKeown, 2001).

In this particular exemplar, the teacher and students are discussing some of the feelings that Yoon has as she acclimates to the culture of the United States and tries to
make friends. The exemplar begins as the teacher reads a portion of the text to the class, and then tells the students that she is going to ask them a question that will require that they give their thoughts, or opinion, on that part of the text. She then asks the following opinion/evaluative question: “What do you think about the paragraph I just read to you?” She then engages in an exchange with one individual student, Student 2, who answers her question (102), and says that she thinks that Yoon doesn’t have any friends and no one wants to be her friend because no one likes her. The teacher then reiterates the child’s answer in question format, in order to validate and recognize the response, as well to probe for further information reflective of an elaboration follow-up question, and the student answers “I think so” (105).

100 Teacher: Okay. Now I’m going to read something to you in the beginning of this page and I want to ask you a question, okay? I want you to give me your opinion, your feelings on something, what you think about it. That’s what I’m asking you.

“I sat by the window and watched a robin hop, hop in the yard, and ‘He’s all alone too,’ I thought. He has no friends. No one likes him.” What I jus – just read to you, what do you think about that?

101 Student 1: It-

102 Teacher: What do you think about the paragraph I just read to you? Yes?

103 Student 2: She ain’t got no friends ‘cause nobody like her.

104 Teacher: Okay, her. So you think she doesn’t have friends because no one likes her?
105 Student 2: I think so.

Following, the teacher re-reads the same portion of the text again for the students (106), to add emphasis, and asks them to think carefully about what she reads. She then elaborates beyond the text for the students, regarding this passage, and asks the students if they have ever been in a situation where they feel all alone and nobody wants to talk to them, and it feels like no one likes them. In response to her question, and Student 3 raises her hand, and the teacher in turn asks that individual student to share that experience, and what her feelings were in that situation (107). The child, in an exchange with the teacher, explains the situation where she had such feelings to the teacher. The teacher, in response, relates these feelings that the student had back to the text, and explains that Yoon, also, felt sad when she came to her new school in America and that the student can relate to those feelings (108).

106 Teacher: Okay. Ah, but listen – listen again, okay? “I sat by the window and watched a little robin hop, hop in the yard. ‘He is all alone too,’ I thought. He has no friends. No one likes him.”

Now you said one very important thing, is that she feels like no one likes her. Have you ever been in that position before, you’re the new person in a classroom or at a school and you feel like you are all alone and nobody likes you ‘cause they won’t talk to you? Okay. They won’t say anything to you? Have you ever been that way before? Have you ever felt that way before? Anyone? Raise your hand. Hey, tell us about that time, Student 3.
107 Student 3: That time when – when I was at first – the first day of school, when I was in the new class then I got in trouble, and I felt sad ‘cause everybody laughed at me.

108 Teacher: Oh, so you know how – you can relate to Yoon, ‘cause she’s a new person. She’s in a totally new country. She – she comes from a place where the way they do things is different than how they do things in America, and so when she goes to class and she doesn’t know how to write her name in English and then the other girl giggles at her, that makes her sad and it makes her feel alone too. That’s why she’s been-

As the continuous, sustained conversation proceeds, Student 4 also interjects, without being prompted, that he too, has felt similar feelings as Yoon, and that he felt bad when another student lied to him. The teacher responds first by asking the student to wait until he is prompted to share with the class. The student then continues to explain that he felt that he could identify with Yoon, because his friend told him to “shut up” and he felt his friend lied to him, which made him have feelings of sadness, like Yoon (111). The exchange ends when the teacher validates this student response, as well as elaborates on it, to make the connection for the class, to how the student felt, and how Yoon felt (112), and that they both shared feelings of sadness, bringing the continuous, sustained conversation exemplifying a coconstructed meaning around this part of the text to a close.

109 Student 4: Me too.

110 Teacher: Let me finish before you start, okay? Remember, when I’m talking you listen, right? Okay. Go ahead.
111 Student 4: Um, when I was in – when I was in the morning class and – when I was in morning class, um, James had said “Sh-shut up” and I didn’t say that. He was lying to me.

112 Teacher: He was lying to you? Okay. All right. Well, I’m sure that won’t happen again. Okay? But you know how it felt. It made you feel bad, mm-hmm? Okay. All right. So now you know how Yoon feels.

Throughout this exemplar of text, the teacher again engages in several interactions representative of ongoing dialogue and exchange, both with a group of students, as well as several individual students, which produce a sustained, continuous conversation about the text. What prompts this conversation is the teacher’s integration of an opinion/evaluative question, reflective of CoI codes, which is aimed inviting the students to think about how Yoon felt in the text, when she didn’t have any friends, and how they might personally identify with those feelings. That which sustains the dialogue in this exemplar is the teacher’s attempts at probing, through elaboration follow-up questioning following her recognition of student responses, as well as elaborating during the exchange, both on the students’ responses and beyond the text. This probing and elaboration helps provide further information that helps support the students’ meaning creation. The questions that the teacher asks, including “How do you feel about what I read to you?” and “Have you ever felt this way before?” offer the students the chance to become actively involved in the conversation about the text, and allow them to connect personally to what they are reading, as they bring in their own thoughts and opinions into the discussion, based upon past experiences and prior knowledge. Sipe (2008) argues
that children take great pleasure in envisioning, and actively talking about, how stories connect to what is going on in their lives, as the co-construct meaning, with the support of their teacher, about the text. When they relate stories to themselves, students have the opportunity to develop increasingly important and meaningful connections as they become better readers.

**Discussion of Exemplars Representing the Welcoming of Student Interjections, Which Supports Continuous, Sustained Conversation**

I continue with an analysis of two additional exemplars of transcript from read aloud instruction exemplifying the teacher’s attempts at welcoming students’ interjections during text reading in support of APS. When students have the chance to guide and contribute to the conversation by providing their interjections, they become actively engaged in the text reading and motivated to contribute and co-construct meaning with their teacher and peers as part of the reading process (Wiseman, 2011).

The first example, reflective of the teacher’s welcoming of student interjections, is found in Lesson 7, during a subsequent reading of *All the Colors We Are* (Kissinger, 2002). This bilingual text provides an in-depth look at how individuals get their skin color, through ancestors, the sun, and the pigment melanin. In this exemplar, the teacher and students discuss the skin color of their ancestors, and how this skin color was passed onto them, which is one of the main ideas of the text. They also discuss how the skin color of individuals varies, based upon the region where they were born and live. I highlight this exemplar because of its emphasis on having students make text to self connections, which is referenced in the curriculum. *Voices Reading* encourages the teacher to help students make these types connections, as well as to verbalize and share them with their fellow students, as part of the development of their listening and speaking literacy skills. She is
also encouraged to focus on literacy and character development, by having students think about points of view, in terms of the literature they are reading, and how this affects their first-person perspective taking, in terms of how they focus on their inner thoughts, feeling and values, and how these are shared with others (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). In this particular text, the teacher is guided to ask the students to take notice of the different shades of skin color of individuals in the class, prompting them “to describe someone’s skin color and ancestry” (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b, p. T213). Connecting the text to students’ own lives builds story relevance; lengthy interactions such as these highlight the possibilities for sharing, promoting and highlighting student responses to the read aloud by the teacher (Barrentine, 1996), as they co-construct meaning about the text together.

The teacher begins this excerpt of continuous, sustained conversation by asking the students an open ended opinion/evaluative question regarding where they think their ancestors might be from, and what types of skin color they have (100-104). At this point in the excerpt, Student 2 makes his own interjection without being prompted through a question or probing, about the color of his parents’ skin (105). The teacher acknowledges this comment, and elaborates on it further, explaining why this might be so (106). Following, Student 3 makes an interjection, as he looks at the book and asks if the picture represents Haiti? The teacher responds to the interjection, stating that it is not Haiti, but acknowledges that the student’s understanding regarding the text is on the right track, as individuals with dark or light skin usually have children with dark or light skin (107-108). She then proceeds to ask an open ended, factual/recall question about the color of his father’s skin, which the teacher also acknowledges, as well as elaborates on, by reading more from the text (108-110). In response, the same student then makes an
Your parents, your grandparents, and your ancestors from long ago lived in places where there was a lot of sunshine and heat. They probably had dark skin. What do you think? People from the islands, they live in the Caribbean Islands, have you ever been? Who’s been to the Bahamas? Okay. What’s the skin color of people in the Bahamas?


102 Teacher: It’s either dark brown or black. Black is your race, not your skin. But if you go to Africa, what do you think?

103 Student 1: Dark skin.

104 Teacher: Very dark. It depends where they are, which region they are in, in Africa, but there are some people in Africa who have light brown skin, and some who have very, very dark skin, okay? Okay? Yes, Student 2?

105 Student 2: My parents’ skin is light.

106 Teacher: Okay. Well. If they lived in place with less sun and heat, they probably have light skin, okay, like these people here. They live in a place where there is less sun and heat.

107 Student 3: Where is that? Haiti?
Haiti? No. Haiti, it gets dark, it gets hot in Haiti, okay? People – People with dark skin usually have children with dark skin. So you are on the right track, Student 4, when you said my mom looks like me, okay? ‘Cause your mom’s skin is light skin, you ended up with light skin. What about your dad, does he have light skin or dark brown skin?

Student 4: He has dark skin.

Teacher: Okay, so then, listen to this. If one parent has light skin and one parent has dark skin, their children’s skin may be light, dark, or in between. So you may have – you may have your dad’s skin color, instead of your mom’s. Okay. Well, listen to this. Uh, because your mom raised you doesn’t have anything to do with your skin color. Only the melanin in your skin. And because she has light skin, that’s probably why your skin instead of – you have her skin color instead of your dad’s skin color, and maybe somebody in your – in – in some of her ancestors had light skin. So you could fall in between there. Yes?

Student 3: I was saying that people say that my mom and I look the same.

Teacher: That you look the same.

[Chatter]

Student 4 then interjects that his siblings have light skin like his mother, but that he has dark skin like his father, which the teacher acknowledges, and then again elaborates on, stating that she saw the student’s father, and agrees that this is where the
student got his skin tone from (111-115). Like the first example, the teacher not only acknowledges the student’s statement, she also attempts to elaborate on it further, making sure she clarifies this idea about skin color, as it is important to the students’ understanding of the read aloud text. She does this by explaining that some individuals inherit the color of their mother’s skin tone, and some of their father’s skin tone, or sometimes in between. The excerpt ends as the teacher continue to elaborate on this student’s comment further, and explain that because of our ancestors, our skin tone varies, and that this is one of the many ways we differ as individuals. As such, she establishes a final clarification surrounding the coconstructed meaning regarding the text.

113 Teacher: Yes, Student 4?

114 Student 4: My sister, my brother, they got light – light – and I got the same – I got the same skin, the same skin as my momma, but not like they do, they got dark –

115 Teacher: Oh, your dad has dark skin. Your dad has dark skin.

[Chatter]

116 Student 5: I am like my daddy’s skin.

117 Teacher: Yeah, I saw your dad yesterday, okay, he has dark skin, like you, that’s where you get your tone from. Remember, we can’t all talk at the same time. Okay, now, listen to this. Skin color we are born with comes from our parents, ancestors, and where they lived long ago.

Through this exchange, and the students’ interjections, reflective of their thoughts regarding the text, as well as the teacher’s responses to these interjections, the students
and teacher again work together collectively to create a shared meaning of what is being read. It is important to note that the exemplar is prompted by the teacher’s discussion of skin color, and how this varies based upon where individuals live. As she engages with the students in this exemplar, she is careful to use locations that are familiar to them, such as the Caribbean, and Africa, reflective of text to self connections, and providing opportunities for the students to relate personally to the text. As she shares about these individuals’ skin color, in relation to the text, the students then feel welcomed to share about their skin color. What prompts this exchange is the teacher’s discussion of skin color, and relating it personally to students, initiating an open-ended opinion/evaluative question regarding individuals’ skin color in the nearby country of the Bahamas. That which sustains the ongoing dialogue and exchange is the individual students’ interjections, reflective of their prior knowledge, and the way in which the teacher welcomes these comments, and elaborates on them, as they collectively build meaning around the text.

The final example, reflecting the teacher’s welcoming of student interjections, takes place as part of a subsequent reading and discussion of My Name is Yoon (Recorvitz, 2003) in Lesson 4, and occurs before the text reading. In the excerpt, the teacher and students again are again discussing key vocabulary words from the text and are reviewing one of the words, “country”. This vocabulary word is important to understanding the meaning of the text because Yoon, the main character of the story, who is a native of Korea but has immigrated to the United States, misses her home country as she tries to adapt to her new home. I emphasize this exemplar because it is representative not only of ongoing, continuous conversation between the teacher and students, but it is
also reflective of an interactive dialogue between the students themselves, without teacher interaction, and their attempt through unsolicited interjections to construct an understanding together regarding the text, based upon their own thoughts and ideas. Beck and colleagues (1997) emphasize the importance of these student-to-student interactions in their research on engaging students with text, emphasizing the importance of having students do the work, as referenced in prior paragraphs, where they “construct the meaning, they wrestle with the ideas, and consider the ways information connects to construct meaning” (p. 33). Furthermore, the Voices Reading curriculum encourages the teacher to have students respect and listen to other learners’ points of view in the classroom, and to express their opinions and points of view, reflective of important listening and speaking literacy skills. As the teacher is building background knowledge for this particular text reading, the curriculum also encourages her to talk about people from other countries who have come to the United States. And as mentioned previously, the discussion of new vocabulary used in the story is important to read aloud instruction and emphasized by the curriculum as an important aspect of the lesson, which should take place prior to the text reading (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b).

During this excerpt, the teacher begins the discussion by providing the students with several examples of countries (100). Following, Student 1, without prompting, repeats one of the countries the teacher mentions, Haiti (101). Following, the teacher acknowledges the student’s interjection by repeating it (102), and continues to probe further by asking the students for some additional examples of countries (102). After the teacher provides another example, Student 2 interjects, without prompting, that Madagascar is a country (105). Several students respond to this statement, and interject
their own responses, in disagreement, without any prompting or interaction from the teacher, expressing that Madagascar is a state, or a movie, or a cartoon (105-108). The teacher then acknowledges the students’ interjections, and continues to elaborate further and provide several more examples of countries, in order to establish coconstructed meaning with the students of the word’s definition (108; 109) as continued, sustained conversation ends.

100 Teacher: Okay. Let me name you a country. Haiti, Mexico, Spain, Spain.

101 Student 1: Haiti.

102 Teacher: Haiti, Spain. What else?

103 Student 1: Texas?

104 Teacher: Germany, Germany. That’s a country.

[Crosstalk]

105 Student 2: Madagascar.

106 Student 3: That’s a state.

107 Student 4: No, that’s a movie. No, that’s a movie

[Crosstalk]

It’s a cartoon that’s a carton.

[Crosstalk]

108 Teacher: Come and sit down, honey. Okay, we know when you see my hand up, that means there is too much talking, Student Name, in the classroom, and Student Name. Madagascar is a movie. That is not a country, I don’t think, not that I know of.

109 Student 4: Movie or a cartoon.
110 Teacher: Ah, maybe Madagascar is a country. Who, who knows? It could be a country. [Crosstalk]

But it’s also a movie. Okay, five. Remember, raise your hand. Remember, no tying of shoes during class. No tying of shoes during class. Okay, put your hand down. Okay. Now, ah, Jamaica, country. Bahamas is a country. Okay? Cuba, a country.

All of those are countries.

In this example from the transcript, the teacher initiates the sustained, continuous conversation by providing several examples of a “country” for the students, with which they might be familiar, as they discuss the meaning of this word. By doing this, she invites the children to use their prior knowledge to share their own examples of countries. As the exemplar continues, the students become engaged in the conversation because of their familiarity with the word “Madagascar”, and began to share their prior knowledge with each other about this term through their personal interjections, which sustains the dialogue. During the discussion, the teacher continues to guide the conversation, as the facilitator, building meaning around the definition of the word “country”. Furthermore, for a very brief period, the ongoing dialogue and exchange is driven by the students. When this happens, it represents the notion that the teacher has created a community of learners in her classroom surrounding read aloud instruction which supports literate engagement and social interaction, and where each member’s thoughts and ideas are valued. As such, she has orchestrated an instructional environment in which students’ view their contributions as legitimate, and where several possible perspectives can exist simultaneously, as a co-constructed meaning is created surrounding the text.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Research has shown that read alouds are integral to the literacy instruction of emergent readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Edwards Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008; Fisher et al., 2004; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Hoffman, 2011; Wiseman, 2011). However, what is lacking in terms of research is what practices teachers employ as part of read aloud instruction (Edwards Santoro et al., 2008; Fien et al., 2011; Morrow, 1988), which of those practices are most effective, and how the literature and curriculum that they utilize support what they do. Furthermore, it is important to note that read aloud instruction, in itself, is not enough; elements of higher level literacy instruction need to be infused into read aloud lessons, which encourage interactive discussion and interpretive meaning, argues Hoffman (2011). Reflective of this, what seems to missing from most literacy instruction relating to read alouds is the opportunity to engage in interactive talk, or a transactional dialogue, that supports a co-construction of meaning shared by the teachers and students surrounding what is being read (Barrentine, 1996; Hoffman, 2011; Wiseman, 2011).

Calkins emphasizes the importance of this type interactive talk and engagement during text reading as part of read aloud instruction this when she states the following:

Helping children think about texts is as essential to the teaching of reading as is to the whole of our lives, and the most powerful way to teach this kind of thinking is through book talks based on read-aloud books. We teach children to think with and between and against texts by helping them say aloud, in conversations with us and with each other, the thoughts they will eventually be able to develop without the interaction of conversation. (Calkins, 2001, p. 226)

The present research study looked at how a first grade teacher in the described summer program promotes an APS to mediate students’ text engagement as part of read
aloud instruction, and how these aspects of her teaching were guided by the literacy curriculum she utilized, as well as the program context. There are several important points worthy of discussion which emanated from the data analysis in this study, which I present in the following paragraphs. I also present limitations and implications for professional development below.

**Teacher and Student Talk During Read Aloud Instruction is Critical, but Atypical**

First of all, as highlighted in the prior chapter, there is significantly more teacher and student talk, as opposed to teacher talk only, which takes place during read aloud instruction, when the class is engaged in conversing about text reading with the support of the teacher. Talking as the story unfolds, argues Sipe (2008), is a unique opportunity which the read aloud situation provides, encouraging student participation and engagement of readers (Wiseman, 2011). If students are always required to listen to stories and save their responses regarding the text for after the reading, they are not afforded the opportunity to experience rich literature actively, through conversations about the text (Sipe, 2008). As such, interactive read alouds, suggests Hoffman (2011) support interactive discussion and freer student talk, as well as a focus on interpretive meaning of the text, as opposed to literal level comprehension, arguing that “children are entirely capable of engaging in higher level literacy practices when their meaning making is facilitated by teacher supports and interactive discussion” (Hoffman, 2011, p. 184).

Despite these benefits, however, interactive talk throughout the entirety of the read aloud lessons regarding critical story ideas, before, during and after the text reading, is not typical in classrooms (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Hoffman, 2011; Hoffman et al., 1993; Sipe, 2008). Reflective of this Hoffman (2011) refers to the study completed by Hoffman
et al. (1993), which provides a description of the most frequently occurring features of read aloud practices. Based upon their data from 537 observations, and looking at the most frequently occurring features of story time in elementary classrooms, Hoffman and colleagues (1993) concluded that the teacher reads to students from a trade book, which is not tied to a particular thematic unit of study, for about 10 to 20 minutes. In addition, the amount of discussion related to the text is less than 5 minutes, which encompasses talk before and after the reading. In addition, as Langer (2001) adds, the reading of literature still tends to be guided by a text-based set of beliefs and behaviors which set predetermined instructional goals, interactions and assessments, reflected in the need for a correct interpretation of text, and the idea of the teacher as the only knowledge-holder during instruction. Thus, the efforts made by the teacher in this study to engage her students in active dialogue and discussion about text throughout such a significant portion of the lessons are noteworthy, as they are not reflective of the typical elementary read aloud structure. While it might appear to the reader that these interactions are not as lengthy, or rich in content, as might be seen in more advanced classrooms of older students, they nonetheless reflect the teacher’s attempts to socialize young, emergent readers who are still developing listening and speaking skills to the practice of engaging actively with text, through higher level literacy practices of analysis, interpretation and critical thinking which meet the literacy requirements of the 21st century, addressed by Hoffman (2011). Furthermore, it is important to note that other factors also influenced the interactions taking place during the lessons. As mentioned previously, substantial time in the summer program was spent by all teachers on issues of classroom management as well as administrative and programmatic concerns. As a result, this
particular teacher might not have allowed her students to engage as freely in dialogue and
discussion in this particular setting as she might have done during the regular school day,
where these types of concerns were not as prevalent. In addition, the summer program
only lasted six weeks, which is a minimal amount of time to be able to establish the
classroom culture and community (Hahn, 2002) necessary to support this type of engaged
interaction surrounding text.

**APS is Supported Through Continuous, Sustained Conversations, Characterized by
the Integration of Open-Ended Questions, followed by Probing and Elaborations,
and the Welcoming of Student Interjections**

As addressed in the Findings, the teacher made attempts to support APS through
both the nature (NoI) and content of her interactions (CoI). The interactions that are most
supportive of this construct and encourage students’ text engagement, produce segments
of continuous, sustained conversation surrounding the reading of the story text as part of
instruction. These conversations are aimed at creating a shared meaning, or
understanding, around a particular aspect of the text as part of the read aloud lesson, and
occur before, during or after the story reading between the teacher and students and the
teacher and individual students. They occur when the teacher and students engage in an
ongoing dialogue or exchange, or the students engage in an ongoing dialogue or
exchange with each other, reflective of ToI codes, and include the following: a)
integration of open-ended questions (CoI code), as well as well as follow-up probing,
through follow-up questions, and elaboration by the teacher (ToI code); and b)
welcoming of student interjections by the teacher (ToI code), reflective of their thoughts
and ideas about the text. The open-ended questions invite students to join the
conversation about the reading; the probing encourages them provide further information
for clarification or elaboration purposes; the elaborations clarify the reading so that students better understand the meaning of text and connect it personally to their lives; and the welcoming of interjections provides an instructional environment in which students can share freely about text.

What is consistent about these moments of continuous, sustained conversation within the transcripts is that they support an interactive discussion surrounding the text, which supports text understanding, in which both the student and teacher are involved; as such, they are reflective of the teacher’s attempt to actively engage with both individual students and multiple students in order to help them not only receive knowledge and extract information, but more importantly, act upon this information, which in turns encourages understanding and co-constructed meaning-making. Discussions such as these include discourse with a purpose, which includes “direction, focus, and movement toward a goal” (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 238). During these discussions, it is the teacher, who attends to the content being read and what ideas are important for building meaning in that content, and also monitors where students are in the process of creating meaning, to help them focus on what will provide them the greatest understanding. As such, reading becomes “the sharing of meaning” and “interaction between the giver and receiver” (Mooney, 1990, p. 2). What makes this co-construction during text reading to support student understanding and meaning-making so unique is that either the student or teacher can initiate the discussion, as was reflected during the instruction highlighted in this study, and multiple participants may respond at the same time, as Hoffman (2011) describes.
Furthermore the teacher does not end these exchanges with an evaluation, as if she is looking for correct answers to questions, but rather she builds from student responses the opportunity to further refine understanding surrounding the text and to construct more refined meanings. During co-construction, the teacher analyzes students’ responses, and then prompts the students with a question or comment, and in this teacher’s case, elaboration beyond the text, if a more refined meaning can be created. As such, the meaning a reader gains from the text is based upon on his/her transaction with that text (Rosenblatt, 1985), and goes beyond initiating, responding and evaluating (I.R.E. pattern), reflected in closed, factual/recall questioning. When students, instead, have the opportunity to transact with the stories they read, a space is created where they, with teacher support, can engage actively with text and co-construct ideas (Delacruz, 2013; Wiseman, 2011; Cazden, 1998; Sipe, 2008). During this engagement, students become accustomed to actively responding, before, during and after the reading of each story (Sipe, 2008). When this type of interaction between text and reader takes place as a part of the read aloud lesson, a social fabric in the classroom develops, supporting student engagement as well as highly literate thinking, which encourages students to question, evaluate and come to their own interpretations about the read aloud, through the establishment of a social discourse community (Langer, 2001).

The following excerpt, from an open-ended interview that I had with the teacher, reflects the teacher’s efforts to create a classroom environment and culture reflective of this type of active engagement. In the excerpt, she provides insight regarding how she approaches her instruction, and how she engages her students in a manner that allows them to collectively participate in the learning process with her. She notes that the
The constant interaction that she has with her students, throughout the lesson, is to “engage their thinking, their understanding”.

**Researcher:** So your discussion during the read aloud…it’s constant dialogue and it’s constant, um, interaction with the, the students. Tell me about that and what your thoughts are in doing that.

**Teacher:** Well, the constant interaction is to engage their thinking, their understanding to see, uh…I want them to start formulating ideas and having a train of thought, being able to express what’s in their minds. So that dialogue is sorta’ like – engages that ‘cause I want to understand how they think. So in order for me to understand how they think, then I need to see what they say in response to a question and it also helps me, gives me an idea of how I can help the child. It shows me, eh, the level of understanding (personal communication, March 23, 2012).

**Curriculum Guides Teacher by Providing a Framework for Instruction**

Another important point of discussion to highlight is that the curriculum guides the teacher, and supports her during read aloud instruction, as highlighted in Chapter 4, as she mediates students’ engagement with text and promotes an APS in her classroom. As is its aim, it provides a framework for instruction which offers students ample opportunity for text engagement, by encouraging the teacher to have students participate in rich discussion, precipitated by higher order questioning and a focus on critical thinking. *Voices Reading* supports the teacher as she makes efforts to engage students in talking about relevant literature through the integration of a read aloud. Through this read aloud experience, students are provided the opportunity to participate in listening and speaking activities which help strengthen their oral language skills, their vocabulary knowledge, as well as comprehension abilities (Zaner Bloser, n.d.). Furthermore, it is also important to note that the curriculum guides the teacher during her instruction as she encourages the students to interactively engage in meaning making about the text, while also making text to self connections and engaging in personal perspective taking. The
theory of situated cognition, suggests that the most compelling purposes for motivating children to read are those experiences that are reflective of their personal lives and social relationships, as they engage in the social world around them (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Paris et al., 1991; Turner, 1995; Wigfield et al., 2004). As such, when the teacher posed open-ended questions, followed by probing and elaboration, and welcomed the students’ thoughts into the conversation about the text, as well as emphasized the central guiding question and the importance of make text to self connections, she engaged in literacy instruction that supported an emphasis on personal relevance, also.

Reflective of these ideas, it is important to highlight that the teacher made choices throughout her instruction to rely upon Voices Reading for guidance and support. More specifically, using the curriculum, she supported an APS by asking students questions about the rich, multicultural literature, not just after it had been read, but also during; she also allowed opportunities for students to provide their thoughts and opinions, through interjections, and to respond to their classmates’ interjections. In addition, she followed up on student responses, through further elaboration and probing, so that they were motivated to analyze what they read more deeply and engaged in “nuanced interpretations and sophisticated perspective taking” (p., 90, Zaner-Bloser, 2005a). Many of the questions emphasized by the curriculum focus on the students making personal connections with the literature that is read, through text to self connections, in order to foster a deeper engagement with the literature, which the teacher emphasized in the lessons. Some of the questions employed by the teacher and emphasized by the curriculum also place an emphasis on certain literacy skills to help reinforce comprehension, such as text structure, characters, comparing and contrasting, figurative
language, text features, as well as cause and effect (Zaner-Bloser, 2005b). Finally, the teacher placed an emphasis on the instruction of vocabulary, as highlighted by the curriculum, allowing for the students to engage in discussion about the meanings of new words, in relation to the text as well as familiar contexts. She also supported multiple encounters with the new vocabulary words throughout the lesson, providing opportunities for the students to build a richer understanding of the word meanings.

The following exchange that I had with the teacher as part of a collaborative interview also reflects her use of the curriculum as a guiding framework during her instruction:

*Researcher:* The curriculum and multicultural trade books. Did that have any influence on your instruction?

*Interviewee:* Yes, because, when I used the, and especially with character education, having to address the different, different areas in character development – uh, which you don’t normally get with regular curriculum. Well, that I know of. I’ve never taught first grade – in a regular school, but I don’t know if they – they probably do. I wouldn’t say they didn’t, but just using the *Voices* curriculum allowed me to not only to educate them about the regular things of reading and understanding word pronunciation, being able to understand different skills when you’re reading and questioning them, but it also allowed me to tie the stories into real, real world situations…

*Researcher:* So the curriculum helps you –

*Teacher:* The curriculum helps them to understand real world situations. It breaks it down. It gives you enough tools and resources that you can use to give them a very, uh, a vivid picture. So that they can have a good understanding and perhaps that will be a spring board for further development and, and knowledge. So I, I think that using those, those, uh, components – it really helps and I like the fact that it really addresses real world issues rather than abstract issues, ya’ know. Something that they can really relate to. I try to engage them in conversation that will help them to develop the understanding of what it is – to help somebody in need put in this instance and whatever the other–identity awareness (personal communication, July 10, 2012).
Teacher Relies on Cultural Competence to Mediate Text Engagement

In addition, representative of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and culturally responsive instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1994), the teacher also made choices about the discourse style that she used during instruction, demonstrating her own cultural competence and using the program context to support her. Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes that a child’s learning and development is affected greatly by his/her individual culture, including the culture of the home and family. Culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994) adds that a student’s individual culture should be used to overcome the negative effects of the dominant culture as a driving force behind classroom instruction. This teaching strategy acknowledges key differences in language and dialect among students, and focuses on their history, language culture, and background as valuable resources, integral to the establishment of a successful and nurturing learning environment in schools (Delpit, 1998).

In order to help students achieve high literacy proficiency, teachers need to provide them with the opportunity think both analytically and critically when engaging in classroom discourse, to see the relationship among types of language, and to use this language in different contexts in order to find meaning. Wilkinson and Silliman (2001) argue that the language used by teachers and students in the classroom contributes to what is learned and as well as how that learning is carried out. This raises particular concern when children come to school and experience a mismatch between discourse styles of the home and school environments and thus have greater difficulties acquiring this new type of classroom language, integral to their academic success and achievement. Students who are learning English as a second language or dialect face obvious additional
challenges in achieving high literacy proficiency. This varied distribution is extremely important to note, as research has shown that the development of decontextualized language has a strong link to reading literacy skills (Davidson & Snow, 1995; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2000; Snow, 1991).

As such, when the teacher engaged in the discourse style of call-and-response during instruction, primarily during the teaching of new vocabulary in relation to the text, she demonstrated innovation in teaching and a cultural competence, representative of her students’ backgrounds and ‘funds of knowledge’ (González et al., 2005) and also reflective of the context of the program, highlighting the fact that literacy instruction should be representative of students’ home environment and personal experiences. Relying on her cultural competence was a resource for the teacher, and an important starting point for instruction.

The following exchange that I had with the teacher as part of an additional collaborative interview also reflects her desire to create a classroom environment and learning community which is reflective of her students and the program context:

Researcher: Please tell me a bit more about your philosophy of teaching, which you were referencing earlier, and how that influenced what you did in this lesson.

Teacher: My philosophy in teaching is, number one, is that all students can learn. Okay? And plus they learn in different ways and they come from different backgrounds. So keeping that…all of that in mind when I’m sort of teaching the students, it is…it’s going to be my method of teaching…Now as you know, a lot of the kids come probably from, you know, one-parent homes…So I think that, you know, having all that in mind and having the…the fact that maybe they come from homes where, uh, there may be some problems, financial or whatnot, you know, any kind of problems, I feel that, um, in teaching my students, I have to keep all that in mind; so that
when I am trying to help them master a concept it…it would entail my using different strategies to meet that child’s needs. And to help them, you know, to grasp, you know, the techniques, the skills…So, uh, first and foremost my…my philosophy is that all students can learn and that, um, given the opportunity, and when they come with the will…So I believe that all children…that, uh, that you cannot just use one set way of teaching; you have to, uh, assess the needs and then you have to, from that point, uh, design a…the strategy that will best help that child…I tried to teach rigorously in the classroom, uh, exposing them, and…uh, uh, bringing things into the classroom that help them, that…that…that was like a tool for them to learn from, uh, a tool for them to express themselves. And…and just in general creating the atmosphere where the students were able to, uh, just express themselves holistically, uh, through…through, uh, how do you say? Well, engage in activities that allow them to see their uniqueness, and, uh, to see their…their abilities and to also, uh, learn how to engage, uh, positively with others in the classroom environment (personal communication, July 10, 2012).

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

This study is representative of a single case study of a first grade teacher’s implementation of a read aloud lesson in a first grade classroom during a six-week summer academic program. As such, the data collected, although rich in content, is only reflective of one teacher’s instruction, over the period of only seven lessons during a six-week period. It would be very beneficial to collect additional video-taped lesson data from not only this teacher’s classroom, but also other classrooms in the program as part of both the summer component and during the academic year, to provide a more rich data sample reflecting read aloud instruction using the Voices Reading curriculum. This would provide the opportunity to do a comparative analysis using this complex data sample of what was happening in the different classrooms, led by different teachers, at varying grade levels, using different literature from the curriculum. Conducting research in this manner lends itself to the implementation of a multiple case study. In a multiple case
study, the researcher focuses on the same research issue, or concern, but then selects multiple cases to illustrate the issue, such as various instructional practices by various teachers during read aloud instruction, allowing the researcher to show different perspectives on the issue (Creswell, 2006).

Furthermore, the analysis of the teacher’s instruction might have been richer had I looked more deeply at how it varied, based upon whether the lesson was a preliminary reading, or a subsequent reading. Research by McGee and Schickedanz (2007), referenced previously, supports the implementation of repeated interactive read alouds. They argue that across several days of reading the same book, and interacting with that book in different ways, focusing on book introductions, vocabulary support, as analytical questions and comments, as well as after-read discussions using open-ended “why” questions, children have the opportunity to engage in the reading experience in a more active manner. Because I only collected data from seven different lessons throughout the six-week period, as discussed previously, this type of analysis was not possible using such a small sample size.

Finally, although I addressed the type of discursive style the teacher employed during her instruction and how she used that to engage the students in text reading, reflective of APS, as well as personal relevance, a more detailed analysis of both the teacher’s discourse, as well as that of the students, would add significantly to the findings of this study. This type of analysis would require an in-depth study of shorter segments of talk from the videotaped observations, using discourse analysis, focusing more closely on the details of speech as well as the form and function of language, and how they are important to the literacy instruction. It would also be beneficial to look more closely at
the discourse of the teacher and students in relation to African American language norms, culture, and ideology, and how these correlate with specific social practices and support relationships between language and society, specifically in relation to literacy learning, using methods of critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2010; Rogers, 2011).

**Implications for Professional Development**

What impact does this study have on the classroom, in terms of literacy learning, and more specifically, read aloud instruction? As mentioned previously, more research emphasis needs to be placed on how students create meaning from text, reflected in their comprehension abilities, and what teaching methods can be used to support this (Kintsch, 2004). This is particularly true for young emergent readers that are entering school, and have been identified for being at risk for reading failure, particularly those that struggle with socioeconomic difficulties (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hall & Williams, 2010; RAND Reading Study Group & Snow, 2002; Van Kleeck & Stahl, 2003), or are from diverse backgrounds (Edmonds, 2005; Hammond et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994), representative of the students in this study. Furthermore, we need to continue to look at how the basal reading series that teachers use in the classroom support the literacy development of students, and how teachers use this curriculum.

With the current implementation of the new Common Core State Standards in school districts throughout the United States, educators need to understand that meeting these standards for English language arts represents a major shift in regards to educational practice in the classroom. (The Common Core is a set of standards in math and English language arts/literacy outlining what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade, K-12.) The English language arts/literacy standards require that
students be given opportunities to engage in more challenging texts from Grades 2-12.

Furthermore, one of the most crucial aspects these standards, and most relevant to this study, is a strong focus on comprehension, which requires that learners engage in what they describe as a close, attentive reading of these texts. As such, students should be able to engage in independent reading as critical thinkers, determining what a text says explicitly, making logical inferences, and analyzing a text’s craft and structure to determine how those affect the text’s meaning and tone, evaluating the effectiveness or value of the text, and using the information and ideas drawn from text (often referred to as “evidence”) as the basis of one’s own arguments, presentations, and claims. (International Reading Association, 2012, p. 2)

Read alouds as part of classroom instruction, as the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) explicitly highlight, provide children an avenue to experiencing written language that might not be accessible to them, as emergent readers, allowing them to engage with texts that they could not understand independently of teacher support. As such, they are able to grapple with and discuss, with their classmates and teacher, the ideas presented in the texts, as opposed focusing on the process of decoding. Furthermore, they provide a way to engage learners in text reading in a whole class format, creating a collective meaning with the support of the teacher, as reflected in this study, while providing literacy support as they transition into becoming fluent and adept independent readers.

A curriculum, as the one discussed in this study, is one of the integral aspects of successful literacy instruction, as it supports and guides teachers in their literacy instruction as they work with their students. However, it is also important to remember that a literacy curriculum should not be seen as a panacea. Despite the fact that Voices
*Reading* was designed to represent findings from scientific research studies on reading and written by educational experts, and developed and piloted for twenty years in classrooms throughout the country (Zaner-Bloser, 2005a), it provided its own unique set of challenges for the teachers in the summer program where I conducted this research study. Phrases that the instructors in the program in this study used to describe the curriculum were as follows: “too challenging for these students”; “stories have vocabulary words that are too difficult”; “too much information is provided in the teacher manual, making implementation confusing”. These types of concerns regarding curriculum challenges are not unique. Teachers often struggle as they attempt to balance a very complex and multi-dimensional teaching environment, which is constantly changing, with the prior instructional knowledge that they have, and the new curriculum that they are implementing, as well as assessment policies (Kersten & Pardo, 2007).

Furthermore, the curriculum used in this research study took a different approach to literacy, offering students the unique opportunity to engage in the reading of authentic, rich, multicultural literature, through read alouds and interactive discussion. As such, the *Voices Reading* curriculum presented the need to accept a change in thinking about literacy instruction among the teaching staff in the program. This type of change is often difficult for teachers, as it takes time and requires continued support through professional development (Barclay & Lane, 1993; Courtland, 1992; Henk & Moore, 1992).

Scott and colleagues (2011) also that effective literacy instruction, particularly in urban teaching environments such as this one, presents complex challenges that require that well-trained literacy professionals be present in the classroom that are aware of the unique needs of urban learners, and the instructional practices needed to meet those needs
(Scott et al., 2011). These learners, explain Lesaux (2012) need assistance, in particular, with the knowledge-based competencies (conceptual and vocabulary knowledge), developed through the strengthening of language environments, which are needed to support reading in the later school years, and are key to lasting difference in reading outcomes of children particularly those who are from low-income or non-English speaking environments. Because of these complex challenges facing classroom teachers in these types of settings, as well as the diverse needs of their students, opportunities for the richest possible instruction are sometimes overlooked by teachers.

As such, effective professional development in terms of curriculum implementation is crucial, and should be based on the needs of teachers, involve active and collaborative learning, supported by an environment of learning in institutions of learning, and also be reflective of teachers’ resistance to change in instructional materials and methods (Gibson & Brooks, 2012). As Duke and Block (2012) highlight, students’ vocabulary development, conceptual and content knowledge, as well as reading comprehension abilities cannot be obtained through the implementation of curriculum alone; teacher expertise through development is a necessary factor, also. In addition, research shows that teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students, like those in this study, need to have the opportunity to dialogue regarding their students’ needs, how they plan to meet those needs, and how they can use the curriculum to support this, through ongoing planning meetings and opportunity for reflection and discussion. Through these types of opportunities, teachers can become personally vested in the curriculum they use, and take greater ownership in what needs to be taught (Meidl & Meidl, 2011). Kragler and Martin (2012) suggest that these discussions need to occur
across schools and districts, in order to allow teachers to have a voice in choosing and implementing various practices and programs to meet the needs of their students.
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Appendix A

Coding Documents

Research Question: How does the teacher promote an active participatory structure during the read aloud lesson to support students’ text engagement, and how is this aspect of her teaching guided by the curriculum and program context?

Construct of Active Participatory Structure: The construct of active participatory structure, representative of constructivist theory, suggests that students are actively involved in the reading process, and as such, encouraged to pose their own questions and arguments, as well as to respond to their fellow classmates’ and teacher’s questions and arguments (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), in response to texts, with a focus on a discussion of critical story ideas as well as opportunities to be reflective about text (Dickinson and Smith, 1994; Teale and Martinez, 1996). I am attempting to find instances/examples of this construct in my review of the data; some ways in which they might make themselves present are as follows, based upon the Voices Reading (2006 a, b, c) curriculum: a) motivating students to communicate thoughtfully through discussion of the read aloud text; b) encouraging discussion of important vocabulary and concepts (literacy and social development, including identity awareness) surrounding the read aloud; c) encouraging deeper, critical thinking surrounding these concepts; and d) providing opportunities for students to actively make connections to the text, as well as personal experiences, so that they become better readers and learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE (B), DURING (D), AFTER (A)</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher addresses student directly using name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher engages students using humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds herself of classroom rules of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students importance of being a “good listener”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students importance of their “focusing to learn”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students of “correct behavior” for being a “successful student”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students of classroom rules regarding sharing and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher Reminds Students of Rules of Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students of rules of participation and “who has the floor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students to “pay attention”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher reminds students to listen attentively so that they can remember story and can answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher Requests that Student ReCap Conversation to Show Importance of “staying focused”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher tells students what will happen next for the class in order of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher Uses Student Name to Engage in Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher validates student but re-directs conversation back to instructional topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher addresses student directly using name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B-APS-Teacher Elaborates to Provide Meaning Surrounding Text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1

Sample of Open Coding Scheme: Before Text Reading

174
Research Question: How does the teacher promote an active participatory structure during the read aloud lesson to support students' text engagement, and how is this aspect of her teaching guided by the curriculum and program context?

**CONSTRUCT of ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURE:** The construct of active participatory structure, representative of constructivist theory, suggests that students are actively involved in the reading process, and as such, encouraged to pose their own questions and arguments, as well as to respond to their fellow classmates' and teacher's questions and arguments (Snow, Barns, & Griffin, 1988), in response to text, with a focus on a discussion of critical story ideas as well as opportunities to be reflective about text (Dickinson and Smith, 1984; Tasto and Martin, 1996). I am attempting to find instances/examples of this construct in my review of the data; some ways in which they might make themselves present are as follows, based upon the Voices Reading (2005 a, b, c) curriculum: a) motivating students to communicate thoughtfully through discussion of the read aloud text; b) encouraging discussion of important vocabulary and concept (literacy and social development, including identity awareness) surrounding the read aloud; c) encouraging deeper, critical thinking surrounding these concepts; and d) providing opportunities for students to actively make connections to the text, as well as personal experiences, so that they become better readers and learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE NAME</th>
<th>DEFINED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis: Teacher and Group of Students</td>
<td>Teacher addresses: multiple students in the hopes of soliciting a response (sometimes teacher addresses a group of students, although transcriber only listed 1 student response or only 1 student answered, I had to use video to confirm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis: Teacher and Student</td>
<td>Teacher addresses: 1 individual student in the hopes of soliciting a response; or, student proposes a question or statement during discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis: Teacher only</td>
<td>Teacher does not address student or multiple students directly, she simply makes declarative statements about the text or asks rhetorical questions, without the intention of soliciting a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis: Teacher and Group of Students_Not About Text</td>
<td>Interaction: between teacher and multiple students that do not pertain to text discussion/read aloud (including text vocabulary) directly (e.g. classroom input, item; administrative tasks)-THESE INTERACTIONS ARE NOT RELEVANT TO STUDY AND WILL NOT BE CODED FURTHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis: Teacher and Student_Not About Text</td>
<td>Interaction: between teacher and individual student that do not pertain to text discussion/read aloud (including text vocabulary) directly (e.g. classroom input, item; administrative tasks)-THESE INTERACTIONS ARE NOT RELEVANT TO STUDY AND WILL NOT BE CODED FURTHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis: Teacher only_Not About Text</td>
<td>Declarative statements or rhetorical questions made by teacher that do not pertain to text discussion/read aloud (including text vocabulary) directly (e.g. classroom input, item; administrative tasks)-THESE INTERACTIONS ARE NOT RELEVANT TO STUDY AND WILL NOT BE CODED FURTHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Teacher and Group of Students_APS</td>
<td>Interaction: between teacher and multiple students, reflective of APS (Active Participatory Structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Teacher and Student_APS</td>
<td>Interaction: between teacher and individual students, reflective of APS (Active Participatory Structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Teacher only_APS</td>
<td>Statements made by teacher only, reflective of APS (Active Participatory Structure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.2**

Coding Scheme Based Upon Units of Analysis
Research Question: How does the teacher promote an active participatory structure during the read aloud lesson to support students' text engagement, and how is this aspect of her teaching guided by the curriculum and program context?

**CONSTRUCT OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURE**. The construct of active participatory structure, representative of constructivist theory, suggests that students are actively involved in the reading process, and as such, encouraged to pose their own questions and arguments, as well as to respond to their fellow classmates' and teacher's questions and arguments (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), in response to texts, with a focus on a discussion of critical story ideas as well as opportunities to be reflective about text (Dickinson and Smith, 1994. Taska and Martin, 1996). I am attempting to find instances/examples of this construct in my analyses of the data: some ways in which they might make themselves present are as follows, based upon the Voice Reading (2005 a, b, c) curriculum: a) motivating students to communicate thoughtfully through discussion of the read aloud text; b) encouraging discussion of important vocabulary and concepts (literacy and social development, including identity awareness) surrounding the read aloud; c) encouraging deeper, critical thinking surrounding these concepts; and d) providing opportunities for students to actively make connections to the text, as well as personal experience, so that they become better readers and learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Definition</th>
<th>PRELIMINARY CODES BASED on RAW DATA THEMES from OPEN CODING</th>
<th>POSSIBLE CATEGORIES/REFINED THEMES to be used by 2nd coder</th>
<th>CODE EXEMPLAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEFORE</strong></td>
<td>B_APS Teacher &amp; Group of Students Students interact their own responses/comments without being solicited</td>
<td>B_APS Teacher &amp; Group of Students STUDENTS INTERACT RESPONSE DURING DISCUSSION WITH PROMPTING</td>
<td>P.P. Grade1_Teacher1_Video4_Pair Dec 9-69 (Student: I was born in Georgia.) (790-895) (Super) Student: I was born in Georgia. Miss Little: So you're a native of Florida. Student: I was born in Georgia. Miss Little: And in specific, Miami Okay. (Czechoslovakian) Student: I was born _______ born. Miss Little: Okay. But I said you were born in Miami. _______ Okay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADDED THEMATIC CODE
### Figure 6.3

Sample of Refined and Final Coding Scheme, based upon Open Coding and Units of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher and Students Discuss Activity which has the purpose of Reinforcing Text Meaning</th>
<th>B_APS_Teacher &amp; Group of Students Teacher and Students discuss journal activity asking students to illustrate their ideas of the beginning of the story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B_APS_Teacher &amp; Group of Students Teacher &amp; Students engage in call &amp; response during instruction of vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Text:**

Teacher: Everybody say it again.

[All students say the word “country”]

Teacher: Try it again.

[All students say the word “country”]

Teacher: Attention...

[All students say the word “a nation”]

Teacher: Or a state...
## Appendix B

### Content of Interaction (CoI) and Type of Interaction (ToI) Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Exemplar from Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teacher and students engage in ongoing dialogue or exchange | Defines interactions which take place when the teacher and students engage in a continuous dialogue or exchange, which is generally initiated by the teacher, and contains at least two back and forth continuous verbal exchanges, either in the form of comments made and responded to, or questions posed and answered. | LESSON 10:  
Teacher: Who can tell me what they think this story is going to be about? All the Colors We Are. Okay? Yes, Student Name.  
Monica: Um, it’s going to be – it – it, uh, - I think it’s going to be about some of the people are brown and some people are black.  
Teacher: Right. So it’s going to be about – Yes, what were you going to say, Student Name.  
Ariel: I think the story’s going to be about colors.  
Teacher: About colors, okay. |
| Students engage in ongoing dialogue and exchange with each other | Defines interactions which take place when the students only, without involvement from the teacher, engage in a continuous dialogue or exchange, which is generally initiated by another student, and contains at least two back and forth continuous verbal exchanges, either in the form of comments made and responded to, or questions posed and answered. | Lesson 4:  
Teacher: Okay. Let me name you a country. Haiti, Mexico, Spain, Spain…German. Germany. That's a country.  
[Crosstalk]  
Second Individual Student: Madagascar.  
Third Individual Student: That’s a state.  
Fourth Individual Student: No, that’s a movie. No, that’s a movie.  
[Crosstalk] |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Page 179</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Students interject response without teacher prompting | Students engage in classroom discussion w/ teacher willingly without being questioned/prompted, interjecting their own comments conversation, which teacher welcomes | Lesson 7:  
Teacher: Oh, your dad has dark skin. Your dad has dark skin.  
Fifth Individual Student: I am like my daddy’s skin.  
Teacher: Yeah, I saw your dad yesterday, okay, he has dark skin, like you, that’s where you get your tone from. | It’s a cartoon that’s a carton. |
| Teacher and Students Engage in Call and Response | Teacher engages students in dialogue pertaining to the read aloud or vocabulary instruction using a method in which there is a statement quickly followed by a response or echoing statement | Lesson 1:  
Teacher: All right. Wisdom; let’s read it again. Let’s read it again. Wisdom.  
[All students say the word “wisdom”]  
Teacher: Good judgment.  
[All students say the words “good judgment”]  
Teacher: In knowing what to do…  
[All students say the words “in knowing what to do”] | |
| Teacher Probes and Elaborates Surrounding Questions | Teacher acknowledges students’ interjections/responses, reflective of their attempts at participation, and elaborates and presses further for additional information | Lesson 6:  
Teacher: What is Pablo expecting his tree to look like when he gets to Lito’s house?  
Second Individual Student: He wants it to be beautiful and decorated.  
Teacher: He wants it to be beautiful and decorated, and he’s gonna do what? While he’s driving in the car with Mom? | |

**Figure 6.4**

Type of Analysis (ToI) Codes, Descriptions, and Exemplars
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Exemplar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks factual/recall questions</td>
<td>Defines interactions which take place when the teacher asks students questions that target factual information needed for recall or restatement of concepts. In factual questions, children are not asked to compare or relate material during vocabulary discussion and text reading and discussion.</td>
<td>Lesson 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class, is Georgia a country?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students: No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: What is Georgia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Student: A city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: A state. Georgia is a state. Okay? Miami is a city. Okay? And we are in the what? State of what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students: Miami.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: What state are we in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students: Florida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: Florida. Very good. So Miami is a city in the state of Florida. Georgia is a state. Who can name me a country? Okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks inferential questions</td>
<td>Teacher asks student questions which require them to read between the lines or beyond the lines. Making an inference requires the reader to combine prior knowledge and experience with information from the text.</td>
<td>Lesson 6:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: So when he gets there, he is going to see the tree. But, what is he trying – what information is he trying to get from his mother about his tree? Yes, Student Name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fifth Individual Student: He’s trying to – he’s trying to – he’s trying to see what’s on his tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: What’s on his tree; he wants to know how his grandpa, Lito, decorated his tree, right? Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks opinion/evaluative questions</td>
<td>Teacher asks students questions that require them to tell you their point of view.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: What do you think about the paragraph I just read to you? Yes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student 2: She ain’t got no friends ‘cause nobody like her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and students discuss key literacy</td>
<td>Teacher reminds students through discussion of key literacy concepts that present themselves in the lesson discussion, such as TEXT STRUCTURE/SEQUENCE of EVENTS, TEXT METAPHORS, TEXT CHARACTERS, etc.</td>
<td>Lesson 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: But…remember when I said the cupcake; there is a comparison going on between Yoon and the cupcake? Which is called a metaphor. The cupcake is a metaphor. It’s not – She doesn’t – She can’t become a cupcake, okay? It’s the idea of what the cupcake will do for her, if she was a cupcake. It’s how it would make people treat her, or cause people to treat her, or to see her, okay? So, if she wants to be a cupcake – because she knows everybody loves cupcakes, right, and when they see cupcakes everybody wants a cupcake – what do you think Yoon wants? She doesn’t really want to be a cupcake, but she likes the idea of being a cupcake, because – everybody loves cupcakes. So what does she really want? She wants people to want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child: Like her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher and students discuss key vocabulary

Teacher highlights the instruction of key vocabulary during lesson

Teacher:

What would wisdom suggest you do, or – you gotta know what to do at that time? Cars are coming this way; they are coming that way. You want to cross over to the other side. So, wisdom – having wisdom, what would you do? You gotta know what to do at that point…what were you gonna say Student Name? Go ahead and tell me what you were gonna say first.

First Individual Student

You’re gonna get hit by a car.

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**Figure 6.5**

Content of Analysis Codes (CoI) Descriptions and Exemplars