Dialogue Journals: Literacy Transactions of Fourth-Grade Students

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Abstract

This study was designed to explore written responses of dialogue journals in a fourth-grade social studies classroom to better understand individuals' meaning-making responses during content-based lessons. The Transactional Theory of Literacy acknowledges that readers generate individualized experiences as they transact with literacy. Although Rosenblatt focused explicitly on the transactions readers make with text, this study expands the idea of these transactions to the more current, unbounded definition of text. Writing could be the tool used for students to record these transactions that lead to their continuously changing, individualized understandings. Through journals, students conversed with one another using written dialogue in the continued generation or restructuring of existing understandings in response to exposure of a content-specific text. The following research questions were addressed in the study: How do written responses of fourth-grade students made in dialogue journals express students' understandings of content-based lessons? 2) To what extent do dialogue journals motivate students in content-based lessons? Analysis of dialogue journals showed evidence of varying levels of understanding, the effective use of journals as a communication tool, and differences in statement types depending on journal audience and content materials used. The MUSIC Model Inventory (Jones, 2009) used to assess perceptions of motivational constructs related to use of dialogue journals in social studies lessons yielded positive results for all constructs measured. Therefore, the results of the study including word count findings, qualitative journal analysis, and observational files clearly showed evidence of dialogue journals being a motivating way of having students express their understandings of content-based texts.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This study was designed to explore written responses of dialogue journals in a fourth-grade social studies classroom to better understand how students make meaning during content-based lessons. This study focuses on social studies lessons in a fourth-grade classroom. All readers transact (read and make meaning of a text) differently depending on their prior knowledge and experiences. Writing could be the tool used for students to record these transactions that lead to their continuously changing, individualized understandings. Through journals, students conversed with one another using written dialogue in the continued generation or restructuring of existing understandings in response to exposure of a content-specific text. The following research questions were addressed in the study: How do written responses of fourth-grade students made in dialogue journals express students' understandings of content-based lessons? 2) To what extent do dialogue journals motivate students in content-based lessons? Analysis of dialogue journals showed evidence of varying levels of students' understanding, the effective use of journals as a communication tool, and differences in statement types depending on journal audience and content materials used. The MUSIC Model Inventory (Jones, 2009) used to assess perceptions of motivational constructs related to use of dialogue journals in social studies lessons yielded positive results for all constructs measured. This inventory is a short survey to determine students' perceptions of motivational constructs related to a specific classroom activity. Therefore, the results of the study including word count findings, qualitative journal analysis, and observational files clearly showed evidence of dialogue journals being a motivating way of having students express their understandings of content-based texts.

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Chapter 1

Writing is a subject area close to my heart as I sit staring at a blank page, struggling with how to start, how to formulate my ideas in such a way that others clearly understand my perceptions, wondering why writing after earning a high school diploma, bachelor's degree, and master's degree is still a daunting task. Writing is an everyday skill used for things such as grocery lists, Facebook posts, and email correspondence. Why then is writing instruction so focused on the composition of a five-paragraph essay and so detached from functional writing skills applied in naturalistic ways?

Classroom Experience

As a teacher, I encouraged writing in my elementary classroom. I enjoyed trying to decipher the inventive spelling and listened as excited learners retold their stories and explained their pictures. We sat in a large group on the floor, children full of wiggles, waiting with anticipation for their turn to proudly share their latest literary masterpiece. It seemed, when I started teaching, that all elementary educators had a writing time in their day. Of course, that was back when there was a state writing test during my years teaching in North Carolina. Many states no longer require a standards-based writing assessment in elementary grades; thus, with the push for passing scores on subjects that have standards-based tests, there is little time for writing instruction or assessments.

Personal Experience

Another motivating experience fueling my interest in writing instruction came from outside of the classroom on a more personal level. When making the decision to move states in

pursuit of a doctoral degree, I found it difficult to move away from my close-knit family all living within a ten minute drive of one another. One way of coping with this was to have my grandmother journal about her life experiences so that although I may not have her close by to visit, I could read and reread her stories. I purchased a red, leather journal at the store, typed up the questions I wanted her to answer, and pasted them in the front of the journal. Before moving, I sat down with her to explain what I wanted and asked that she write a few pages to answer each of my questions. The questions ranged from personal items such as "Tell me about the day you got married" to historical based events such as explaining what families did for entertainment before television and living during the Great Depression. Writing about these memories also led to my grandmother and I sitting down together to dig through old photographs capturing some of the memories written about in the journal. I have since taken the journal apart and paired the photos with her writings in the form of a scrapbook. This artifact is undoubtedly a priceless keepsake that I will treasure for years to come.

The reason this journal inspired me to further explore writing instruction came as I teared up while reading the last page my grandmother had written. After answering all of my questions, she wrote a letter expressing her sorrow in her writing abilities and how she hoped that I would be able to read and understand the stories. I was also intrigued by a comment she made that said she hoped she hadn't hurt anyone by writing this. I realized within this letter that she felt somewhat incompetent in her writing abilities yet she knew the weight carried by written documents and that these words would now live on long after her because of taking on written form. I was hurt to know that my grandmother felt this way about her writing when I knew the stories were each filled with precious family memories, wisdom, and guidance for me for the

future. This artifact is one example of the power of written words along with the awareness that regardless of age, writing is a skill in which many people struggle.

Research on Writing Instruction

Moving forward to my studies as a doctoral student, I delved into the vast array of research that has been completed related to writing instruction. Getting to know the key players such as Graves, Calkins, Tompkins, and Atwell, it became clear that theoretical and conceptual ideas about how writing should be approached with students was researched and even written in books and articles in a format that classroom teachers could utilize for instruction. In my teaching experience, this research was either not making it into the classroom or was not being implemented in the classroom because of the push for passing scores on standards-based assessments which generally do not focus on writing skills.

Graves (1983) describes many key factors for how writing should be taught in the classroom explaining the importance behind instructional strategies used to scaffold students to the next level in their writing as well as allowing students to publish and begin viewing themselves as authors. Atwell (1998) and Tompkins (2012) also provide strategies for teaching writing and have written books including student examples and suggestions for teachers as to how to introduce and teach the writing process. Lastly, Calkins (2003) is most familiar to me because of her boxed set of writing manuals for teachers that was purchased and used county wide in the school system in which I taught in North Carolina. The manuals provided a procedural way of addressing writing instruction throughout the year and guided teachers in instruction, materials needed, and examples of student work.

I remember getting my boxed set of writing manuals as a teacher and having staff development on writing instruction throughout that year. Of course, just like many other staff

development topics, this was pushed aside for another more current topic or subject area in which the students had performed poorly on standards-based testing at the end of the year and soon, our boxed sets found a home on a bookshelf or in a closet collecting dusk. Although my enthusiasm and appreciation for teaching writing persisted, it seemed that the bigger concern of administrators was reading and math since those were the tested areas.

Writing made its reappearance and began being talked about again in public education as Common Core (NGA Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) was adapted in many states and included the idea of writing across the curriculum. Writing in elementary classrooms across multiple subject areas or writing being integrated into secondary subject area classes other than language arts may or may not be occurring; however, integrative writing activities could provide a window into students' understandings of these difficult content areas.

Research on the Transactional Theory of Literary Work

Rosenblatt (1978) introduced the Transactional Theory of Literary Work making clear the individualized experiences continuously occurring as a reader transacts with a text. These non-linear transactions of the reader develop an understanding unique to that reader. Past experiences and prior knowledge allow for transactions brought forth in applying that past to the text as the reader generates a new experience in the constant creation or recreation of personalized understandings. Rosenblatt (1978, 2005) makes clear the difference in an efferent (reading for the facts) and aesthetic (reading for enjoyment and personal connection) reading stance. In her explanation, Rosenblatt (2005) discusses these reading stances as occurring on a continuum; however, she also points out that based on current teaching and assessment practices, students often approach text in the school setting with a more efferent stance. I would agree with

Rosenblatt on this statement as I think back to the many test-taking strategies I taught my students and expected them to use with each literary assignment. What stood out to me in Rosenblatt's writing of these stances was the importance of the continuum and helping students understand that efferent versus aesthetic is not an either-or approach when reading.

To further explore the difference between efferent versus aesthetic reading stances, I will refer to Rosenblatt's (1978) definitions. An aesthetic reading stance focuses on what is happening during the reading event. "Attention is centered on what he [the reader] is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.25). An efferent reading stance, on the other hand, is when the reader "synthesizes these [associations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas aroused by the words of a text] elements into a meaningful structure" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 25). Rosenblatt goes on to further explain that a reader at the extreme efferent end would attempt to completely disengage from the affective responses resulting from literary transactions focusing solely on the information and concepts to be extracted from the reading. A reader focusing more on an aesthetic reading stance is more connected with the text, allowing the words to generate visual and auditory attachments, which evoke an emotional experience. In some instances, this aesthetic stance can allow a reader to forego knowledge of the "real world" being applied to the text in order to a reality brought forth through the reading experience that may not align with actuality (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Using Dialogue Journals

Integrating Rosenblatt's (1978) ideas presented in the Transactional Theory of Literary Work and the awareness of having both an efferent and aesthetic reading stance simultaneously, could be enabled through students using journals to record their aesthetic transactions with text. The use of dialogue journals in this study shifts from the explicit distinction Rosenblatt makes of

students transacting while reading to instead focusing on all literacy transactions students make as they are exposed to various forms of literacy. Teachers often have students complete comprehension questions or tasks after exposure to a text. Having students use dialogue journal to record their thoughts throughout the text experience could help shift the reading stance from efferent to aesthetic. Recognizing aesthetic responses could help students develop a more personal connection to texts which could increase engagement and motivation.

Dialogue journals are one tool that could be used in recording text transactions as well as allowing students to converse with one another and the teacher about their experiences generated from the text. Hancock (1993) used dialogue journals in the language arts classroom by having students record their thoughts while reading four different fictional novels. She was able to draw conclusions about the types of responses students recorded while reading. Knowing that transactions are occurring continuously makes dialogue journals used throughout the lesson an appropriate tool for recording these experiences. Hancock's analysis categorized the reading responses of sixth-grade students as they read, wrote, and were responded to by the researcher in the dialogue journals. These categories could allow teachers to better understand student responses to fictional novels.

Purpose and Details of Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand the written responses of fourth grade learners related to content-based texts. Dialogue journals will be used in a similar way to Hancock's (1993) study in that students will record texts responses throughout the lesson. Differences in the procedures of this study include students responding to one another to make the implementation of dialogue journals in content-area lessons more practical for the general education classroom. The classroom teacher will also respond to students; however, this will

only occur weekly as to not cause a large time commitment from the teacher on a daily basis. More details about the procedures of the study are included in the methodology section; however the key difference between Hancock's study and this study is the use of the journals in having students respond to content-based literacy instead of fictional novels used in the language arts classroom.

The following research questions are addressed in the study: 1) How do written responses of fourth-grade students made in dialogue journals express students' understandings of content-based lessons? 2) To what extent do dialogue journals motivate students in content-based lessons?

Using the dialogue journals in content-based lessons will occur during the social studies lessons for this study. The researcher will then be able to analyze the dialogue journals for reading response types in regards to social studies texts. Students will continue to complete other tasks in social studies including but not limited to answering comprehension questions, taking tests, and preparing for the standards-based social studies test administered by the state at the end of the school year. By implementing the dialogue journals, students could begin to acknowledge their aesthetic responses to literacy as well as the efferent stance often taken during content-specific lessons to score well on a test. Categorizing these responses could help teachers better understand students' literary experience related to social studies. This could help teachers plan lessons to encourage a more aesthetic reading and allow for classroom conversations generated from the aesthetic responses recorded in student journals. By acknowledging the aesthetic responses brought forth from exposure to literacy, students may develop a more personal understanding of the material.

As explained earlier, the aesthetic reading stance can sometimes require readers to overlook knowledge of current actualities in order to engage in the reality existing in the poem created through the reading experience (Rosenblatt, 1978). As students read social studies text from other time periods or other cultures, this aesthetic stance could allow for a living through that offers students a better understanding than that made possible through trying understand historical events in the context of their own society.

An increase in motivation is another possible result of using dialogue journals. Students' perception of care, a motivational construct, could be increased by written conversations both between other students and the teacher as they respond to one another about experiences and understandings brought forth from their transactions with texts. Other motivational constructs such as interest may also increase as students become more aware of their aesthetic responses to literacy encouraging students to pay attention to personal connections and responses.

Both reading responses and motivational constructs will be measured and analyzed in regards to using dialogue journals during social studies in order to answer the research questions presented earlier. In discussing the results of the study, the researcher could shed light on strategies for utilizing dialogue journals in social studies lessons. The use of journals as explained in this study could help teachers better understand students' meaning-making processes occurring during exposure to social studies texts. This could allow teachers to reflect on student understandings and plan future lessons based on individual literacy transactions, understandings, and misconceptions of students. Basically, the dialogue journal would become a form of informal assessment for student learning in social studies. The journals can also be a tool for connecting students' learning and understandings as they communicate back and forth within their journals. Teachers could use these conversations to begin larger classroom

discussions further connecting students' understandings and encouraging the continuous transactions and reconstruction of knowledge stemming from exposure to various social studies texts.

It is clear that writing is an essential life skill and could be useful across the curriculum. Finding ways of integrating writing into existing content-based lessons could make for more enriched conversations and understandings for all students while providing another assessment tool for teachers. Dialogue journals are one way of integrating writing with social studies that could allow teachers to better understand students reading transactions and possibly increase motivation in social studies lessons.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Much educational research has been completed about writing instruction and writing assessments. Many of the articles are full of technique and implementation ideas invigorating enough to make a reader want to reenter the classroom for a test drive. Others highlight the difficulties in assessing student writing. And then, there are those articles that reveal the power held by writing as a meaning-making and communicating tool which requires higher level thinking as students synthesize information and generate their own understandings. The latter of these is my favorite and I have come across a pivotal article, explained in detail later, in which the researcher uses journaling as a reader-response tool for students to record their make meaning using written discourse.

Moving forward, an explanation of the Transactional Theory of Literacy (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1983), begins the theoretical framework from which this study unfolds. Following this theoretical background, research in both writing instruction and motivation are reviewed in relation to this theory and elementary writing tasks. Lastly, the use of dialogue journals is explained to illustrate past research on dialogue journals and justify how the study will utilize these journals to increase motivation in writing while encouraging the reflective and individual transactions outlined in the Transactional Theory of Literacy.

Transactional Theory of Literary Work

Rosenblatt's theory focused on literary transactions alone; however, current research has extended the definition of literacy and what constitutes a *text*. Literacy instruction includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing which are important skills in all disciplines (Roe & Ross, 2006). This current literacy definition expands the term text

from Rosenblatt's use of the word referring exclusively to literary works to the more unbounded, current definition in text may include various literacies such as speeches, video clips, and internet forums.

Henceforth, therefore I will refer to Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Literary Work as the Transactional Theory of Literacy. Within the language arts time allotted in elementary schools, many teachers focus on reading comprehension strategies which are necessary for adequate performance on standards-based tests. Reading, however, is not a standardized event in which all students interpret the same text in the same way and should be tested on that interpretation in the form of a multiple-choice test.

Literary transactions. Rosenblatt's (1983) Reader Response Theory, later evolving into Transactional Theory of Literary Work (Rosenblatt, 1978), states the idea that students bring their individual selves as social, experienced beings to a text making each individual's interpretation unique. A reader interprets author's textual clues into an existing framework based on prior experiences and assumptions. This interpretation requires readers to forgo some information that does not "fit" their existing assumptions while revising other assumptions to input the author's views (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Transactions occur when "the individual and social elements fuse with cultural and natural elements" (Rosenblatt, 2005). These transactions include the continual interactions of an individual with their environment framed by their prior experiences and opening opportunities for new or modified understandings. Literary transactions are these continual interactions and reconstructions of knowledge resulting as an individual progresses through a text. Transactions between the reader and text are nonlinear events requiring a human-centered efferent reading, meaning that the reader's interpretation and reflection of the text is the primary concern

(Rosenblatt, 1978). Rosenblatt also makes it clear that this experience with the reader in creating the poem is a transaction and not an interaction. Interaction is generally classified as a transfer of something between two objects/people but does not capture Rosenblatt's urgency in understanding the significance of the reciprocal, continuous, nonlinear process of transacting in which all involved are unceasingly transformed. These continual transactions are the source of meaning making for the reader and the text since each is rendered incapable of interpretation without the other.

Meanings made from literary transactions relate Rosenblatt's theory back to Dewey's use of the term *warranted assertions*. Rosenblatt borrows Dewey's term using it to clarify that meaning made from transactions are not "permanent, absolute truth, but leaves open the possibility that alternative explanations for the same facts may be found, that new evidence may be discovered, or that different criteria or paradigms may be developed" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 23). Again, this highlights the use of transactions as being a continuous process undergone by the reader and the text.

Rosenblatt best explains literary transactions in her book *The Reader, The Text, The Poem* (1978) in which she uses the poem to represent the experience created by the reader thought transactions with literacy. As the reader advances through a text experiencing the author's words, a new experience evolves, the poem. This is a unique experience made from the transactions between the reader and the text provided by the author, yet the poem itself cannot be predicted or controlled by the author.

This reading experience connects with Dewey's (1934) term poiesis, a calling into existence. This term and Rosenblatt's explanation of aesthetic reading explain the experience brought forth as a reader transacts with a text requiring readers to be "highly active in evoking

that poem from the page" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 22). The reader's aesthetic reading of the text

has allowed for the construction of new experiences unique to that individual building on their

prior knowledge and experiences and contributing to future text encounters. Both Rosenblatt

(1978) and Dewey (1934) emphasize the active process of creating the work of art, which can

only be created by the individual himself.

     Text interpretations. Saussure, known for his developments in linguistics and

semiology, comments on language signs explaining that words have no meaning but we have

assigned meaning to words and can therefore use words to communicate because of compatible

abstractions extracted from experiences (as cited in Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 3). He notes that a

sound-image, an image brought forth in the mind to bring a previous experience into

consciousness, occurs as a reaction to hearing or reading a word, noting that it is not the word

itself but the connections we have made to the word that bring about meanings and

understandings. Spivey (1995) also notes the complexity of attaching meaning to words in his

chapter on written discourse by stating, "written texts are merely sets of graphic marks that can

serve as cues to those meanings that are constructed mentally through comprehending and

composing" (p. 313). Both of these constructivists point to the humanness required to

understand and connect meaning to texts.

     Literacy transactions. In the case of literacy transactions, this interpretative process of

symbolic interactionism occurs as the reader creates what Rosenblatt labels *the poem*. The text is

the creation of the author; however as the reader progresses through the text, they are

individually noting, assessing/defining, and acting as they create their transactions and

experiences with the text. Rosenblatt also notes the importance of understanding the significance

of action taken by the person/reader. With the Transactional Theory of Literacy and symbolic

interactionism, an individual's response to an object/text is a complex process, not simply a predictable reflex.

Rosenblatt (1978) states, "The text is merely an object of paper and ink until some reader responds to the marks on the page as verbal symbols" (p. 23). Based on this understanding, Rosenblatt is explaining that the text alone cannot be used to determine whether an aesthetic or non-aesthetic response to the text will occur. The text is only one object among the materials needed for poiesis (Rosenblatt, 1978). Therefore, the meaning-making process occurring as one creates the poem is an ongoing, active, and formative process.

Rosenblatt (1995) also comments on this complex meaning making process by stating, "understanding of even one word demands a framework of ideas about humankind, nature, and society" (p. 106). In discussing meaning made during the reading process, Rosenblatt (2005) clarifies that meaning is made only when students transact with the literature. Rosenblatt, Spivey, and de Saussure allude to the idea that text alone has no meaning without the reader. It is the reader's existing knowledge structures used to read and personally respond to the text that allows for the continual reevaluating and possible restructuring of mental understandings. This notion of consistency relates back to Rosenblatt's definition of aesthetic and efferent reading stances. As explained earlier, Rosenblatt made clear that the extreme aesthetic stance can require the reader to overlook actuality in order to experience the reality of a literary text. Based on this premise, Rosenblatt notes the occurrence of humans making meaning of transactions based on schemes existing in our current society.

This should especially be taken into consideration with elementary students since they are just beginning to develop their vocabulary. Elementary teachers could provide time for students

to reflect on new vocabulary presented in instructional materials encouraging students to take time to construct word meaning and add this knowledge to their existing knowledge structures.

With regards to elementary students' writing, Mermelstein (2006) explains that there is a strong theoretical connection between beginning reading and writing skills; however, the oral vocabulary of a child progresses at a faster pace than their written vocabulary. Knowing this discrepancy in vocabulary exist, teachers must acknowledge that a child's understanding may go beyond the written articulation restricted by a child's written vocabulary. This makes it important for teachers to encourage the use of writing techniques such as inventive spelling so that students are able to express themselves with a focus on content instead of correctness.

Because language is a communicative tool shared within a society, individuals are able to share interpretations with one another based on their abstractions. Though these abstractions differ based on individuals' unique experiences, compatible abstractions and experiences allow for sharing. Obviously, this would mean that the larger the difference in personal experiences, the more likely misunderstandings are to occur in communicating with others. These varying experiences and abstractions also explain the multiple interpretations students generate from the same text.

The idea of reader interpretations being influenced by an existing framework and the manipulation of that framework through reading response has much in common with ideas of constructivism. Piaget's constructivist ideals outline the scheme, organizational units consisting of an event, action, and response (Hala, 1997). The schemes may be action oriented (behavioral) or operative oriented (cognitive) based on the experience causing disequilibrium in an individual's mental structure or understandings. Piaget explains re-presentation as what occurs when an individual reconstructs a previous experience, initiating that knowledge to come into

consciousness. When the scheme of this previous experience does not meet the expectations of the current experience of the individual, one must make accommodations. Accommodations may occur by an individual modifying an existing scheme or generating a new scheme in which the experience can be added to the individual's understandings of their experiential world.

Continuing with constructivist ideas backing the premise of literary response, we must consider the ideas expressed by Dewey concerning reflective thought. Dewey (2011) notes that "the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt" (p. 12). After coming to this state of uncertainty, Dewey explains that one must reflect in order to generate new knowledge from the experience. "To turn things over in the mind," (p. 13) is the metaphor used by Dewey in describing the thinking process in which students suspend judgment while reworking their current understandings. This type of critical thinking expressed by Dewey long ago is crucial in helping students reflect in such a way that they will interpret and internalize educational experiences for later application of that knowledge.

Constructivist ideas in the literacy classroom. The constructivist views of Piaget were sometimes viewed as radical because of their focus on implicit epistemology (Hala, 1997). Piaget elaborates by pointing to the learner-centered, individualized way students acquire knowledge and create mental representations of the ontological reality based on their experiential world. This radical view of constructivism is also addressed by other researchers (Spivey, 1995). This experiential reality is a circumstantial, individual understanding, nontransferable to an ontological reality. Piaget acknowledges that individuals' understandings are always restricted to a person's experiences with the external world and can therefore never be a true representation of the ontological world. The mental construction of an ontological reality, based on these ideas, is inconceivable. This means that each person has an understanding of the world derived from

their unique experiences, but knowing that each persons' experiences, and therefore understandings of reality, differ, there will never be one true explanation for reality.

All students will have an individualized interpretation of a text. Transferring these constructivists ideas into literacy, various reading responses occur because of the students' individualized experiential realities. With each student's experiences being different, the interaction among students in discussing these interpretations could lead to further experiences and reconstruction of their experiential world. All of our experiential realities are a representation of our interactions with the ontological world and through the sharing of these understandings, students may expand or consider views they had not previously considered. Therefore, reading and responding to text and to one another allows students to continually reconsider and reconstruct knowledge even with students at the elementary level.

Teachers taking this into consideration with content related topics can engage students in critical thinking by utilizing these constructivist ideas. Bean and Rigoni (2001) Examples of using literature to engage students in reconstruction of knowledge based around social issues from the social studies curriculum has been the topic of some content area studies (Bean & Rigoni, 2001; Lacina & Watson, 2008) . Moving away from textbook teaching, the use of multiple text sources and encouragement of individual interpretations of texts asks students not to learn about a concept through fact memorization but instead to use existing assumptions to analyze new information as they reconsider those assumptions. This is important to note because it explains that although students will have individualized interpretations of a text, they will be able to share interpretations and have literary discussions as long as they share compatible mental frameworks. Finding this common ground may require the strategic planning of discussion questions by the teacher after reading students' written responses to a text.

Approaching literary transactions related to controversial issues. Discussing ethical issues presented in texts is a must in the opinion of Rosenblatt (1995). She explains that teachers should never avoid controversial issues when they arise noting that "the literature classroom can stimulate the students themselves to develop a thoughtful approach to human behavior" (p. 17). Teachers' book choices can purposefully expose students to different cultures in the world presenting societal structures which counterpoint existing views and understandings. Transactions with these text could require students to consider their personal philosophy in light of a new social setting. This would inevitably require the social and aesthetic elements of literature to come into play together within an interpretation relating back to Rosenblatt's (1995) conclusion that these elements are distinguishable theoretically but inseparable in the practice of literary transactions.

Discussions related to interpretations from literary transactions could lead to perturbation for students. Knowing "the students will bring to his reading the moral and religious code and social philosophy assimilated primarily from his family and community background" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 89), controversies are bound to arise in class discussions and should be embraced as learning experiences within the classroom. In order for this to occur, the teacher must create a safe environment in which students feel comfortable sharing and questioning their own and others' understandings. The goal of these interactions with texts and with other students is to have students move past the simple judgment of right or wrong and to work towards developing an understanding of multiple perspectives. This increased critical thinking could lead to changes in moral attitudes hopefully resulting in a change where "moral judgment itself would thus become more humane" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 222). Students then are working to expand and reconstruct social assumptions as a result of literary transactions that could change their moral

being and influence actions more in line with ideas of democracy even while outside the literature classroom. This increased empathy and understanding of multiple perspectives could create responsive citizens able to transfer critical literacy skills in everyday life experiences. An important concept for students to understand in activities such as this, is that by sharing, they are not expected to detach or lose the self but instead to extend their understanding and possibly continue to grow as a result of sharing and listening (Cuffaro, 1995).

     Transactions as vicarious experiences to approach social issues. All ideas expressed thus far refer to learning as an active process occurring through experience (Hala, 1997; Rosenblatt, 1995). A student must not only have an experience, but think about and reflect on the experience to learn from it. Interpretation and modification of understandings through rationalizing allow us to fit knowledge into our experiential reality and for that knowledge to be useful. Dewey (2011) comments on this in discussing reflective thinking in which one must first be in a state of disequilibrium or confusion and then act on that feeling by inquiring further until the idea causing uncertainty can be nullified or verified. Reflecting on this idea in terms of literary transactions, students must not only read, but then think about and reflect on their reading, meaning made from the reading, and newly constructed or modified knowledge resulting from their text responses.

     Recognizing the only way to learn something is to create the knowledge yourself means knowledge is restricted by our experiences. On this note, Rosenblatt (1995) notes that literature can provide the living through of experiences that students would otherwise not encounter. Rosenblatt also acknowledges that in working with students to increase critical literacy, students need to reflect on the experiences and biases they bring to a text before reading. Knowing these preconceptions could help students better understand their interpretations and the altering views

of others with varied interpretations. The reciprocal process of literary transactions, in this sense, allows students to broaden their experiences through the vicarious experiences in which they take part while reading and transacting with a text.

For example, a common fourth grade text is *Shiloh* (Naylor, 2000), a novel about a dog who runs away from Judd, his abusive owner, and is found, hidden, and taken care of by Marty, a young boy. Marty later pays for Shiloh by working for Judd and builds understandings about Judd's character through his experiences at Judd's house. An elementary child reading this story could interpret the plot and characters very differently based on their individual past experiences. A child with a dog at home, a child who has never been allowed to have a pet, and a child who has had a tragic experience of being bitten by a dog may all have different transactions with this text based on their prior experiences. By reflecting on the events of the story along with sharing past experiences, students could express their literary transactions with others and broaden their understandings as they start to recognize and comprehend how others may have a different interpretation of the same text.

Rosenblatt (1995) also notes that even as students are living through experiences, "literary experience provides the opportunity to help students think rationally about issues with which they are emotionally involved" (p. 286). With this, Rosenblatt points to the power of literature as an opportunity for students to reflect on and engage in conversations about current social issues. In having these conversations based on a piece of literature instead of personal experiences, students can critically analyze their own experiences by way of abstraction through comparison and critique of characters and events in a text. It is possible that literary transactions and conversations about social issues could then alter moral attitudes of students' in future social experiences.

Clearly, we cannot expect all students to engage in the same literary transaction with a text; however, we can expect that each student's literary transaction will be individual to them based on their prior experiences. By reading a text, students can encounter new experiences to add to their repertoire of mental structures working to explain the world around them. These experiences, occurring in real life or through the pages of literature, allow us to create understandings within our experiential world that are useful to us. Knowing that knowledge is limited to experience, providing literary experiences, some of which may not be possible otherwise, is a crucial part of teachers helping students learn.

Encouraging literacy transactions in the elementary classroom. Literary transactions as explained throughout this section are a complex interaction and response to a text. These transactions, as mentioned earlier, can lead to extended reconsiderations of understandings when teachers create safe classroom environments and encourage dialogue about these literary transactions. Complex tasks and higher level thinking such as this are often modeled by the teacher when being introduced into the elementary classroom.

In her book for practitioners, Miller (2002) explains and gives an example of how teachers can think aloud through the meaning making process of comprehension for students. She explains the need for the teacher to invite students to listen as she reads a picture book aloud to the students and explains that while she is holding the book up, she is simply reading the text the author has written. When she places the book in her lap, she is talking aloud through what she was thinking while reading. In doing this, Miller models for students how she is able to connect her own experiences to the events and characters of the story. She also notes the importance of talking to students about meaningful connections so that the connections made

assist students in comprehension. She continues by explaining the scaffolding process of having students work towards making these connections and discuss them without her assistance. Using dialogue can allow students to verbally explain the connections occurring between reader and text (Miller, 2002; Rosenblatt, 1978). This dialogue can also occur in the form of written discourse.

   Conclusion. Many other ideas for using writing along with how to introduce and teach writing effectively in the classroom have been explained in practitioner focused books (Calkins, 1986, 2003; Graves, 1983; Tompkins, 2012). These various methods and stages of the writing process will further be explored in the writing instruction section along with examples for using dialogue journals as well as other writing tasks to aid in comprehension of content area texts. Before moving into the details of writing instruction, research on motivation will be reviewed as it applies to literacy instruction and the elementary classroom. Both the Transactional Theory of Literacy and research presented in the following section about motivation will come together through the later explained use of dialogue journals as a writing tool to be integrated into content-based lessons.

Motivation

   The examination of motivation aims at determining the drive behind one's actions. "The study of motivation concerns those processes that give behavior its energy and direction" (Reeve, 2005, p. 6). Reeve proceeds to break down motivation into internal motives, including needs, cognitions, and emotions, and external events comprised of environmental incentives, both of which can influence the strength and purpose of a motive. Looking closer at the internal motives, needs include those basic needs essential to life, cognitions include ways of thinking such as one's self-concept, and emotions include quick, subjective responses such as feelings.

Motivational research has evolved from grand theories creating one model that encompasses a full explanation for all motivated actions to mini-theories explaining one individual component of motivated actions (Reeve, 2005). The mini-theories address more defined facets of motivation in which they explain and require the use of multiple mini-theories combined to understand the full motive of a phenomena.

Mini-theories in motivation research were developed during the cognitive revolution emphasizing cognitive constructs over biological and environmental constructs (Reeve, 2005). In continuing to the contemporary mini-theories era, the philosophical origins of motivation were networked into the areas of psychology such as educational psychology. For the remainder of this section, I will focus on components of educational psychology and their implications for motivation in the classroom.

Effects of caring on motivation. Caring is a component that is thought to impact student motivation. Caring is defined through the relationship of a carer and one cared for, made valid only when the cared for receives and recognizes the caring (Noddings, 1992). Noddings continues by stating, "caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors" (p. 17). With respect to Noddings' definition and these parameters of caring, teachers must develop and engage in a relationship with students in which students show some type of response to the teacher's effort in developing a personalized relationship.

It is often said that teachers must know their students. Caring relates to teachers making academic and planning decisions related to student growth; however, in order to motivate, a caring relationship introduces an extension to this relationship. To engage in a caring relationship with a student according to Noddings, it seems that a teacher needs to know her students as individuals in terms of personal qualities, interests, and events going on in the students' lives. It

would make sense then that there is no specific set of behaviors that can be listed and used universally in creating this type of relationship, but instead, the relation must be formed and nurtured differently to meet the needs of the individuals.

Nodding (1992) notes that "the structures of current schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care is perhaps greater than ever" (p. 20). Although this statement is from a 1992 source, this point is still valid and maybe even in greater need of consideration. In *Education and Democracy in the 21ˢᵗ Century*, Noddings (2013) notes the decline of vocational education options in public schools and makes clear her opinion that educators should strive to help students graduate high school and be prepared for a job they find satisfying and fulfilling instead of preparing every student to be college ready. She follows up this idea in a later chapter, stating that educators should acknowledge that all students do not exhibit strengths in subject areas measureable through standards-based tests and that all students are in fact good at something and have qualities and strengths appreciated and needed in society.

In further discussing implementing caring into current classrooms, Noddings (2013) suggest four steps within a moral education curriculum. Beginning with modeling, teachers must remember to model caring relationships at all times with students, other colleagues, administrators, janitors, and others. The next step, dialogue, "is a common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation" (p. 23). Through a caring dialogue, teachers can create a democratic environment in which parties work together to make decisions and feel comfortable asking questions. Practice is the third step, requiring teachers to provide opportunities for students to encounter and engage in caring relationships. This includes group work, collaboration, and discussion in which the classroom environment takes on and maintains a caring climate encouraging cooperative learning. The final step in moral education is

confirmation in which the carer identifies individualized and genuine attributions related to the cared for in achieving their best, with relative, obtainable goals in mind. This final step again points to the importance of caring relationships being individualized and relying on personal, in-depth connections. Noddings (2013) best sums up the importance of caring in the statement, "time spent developing relations of care and trust is not time wasted" (p. 52-53).

The idea of caring is brought up in reference to dialogue journals as well. In conversing back and forth with students through dialogue journals, teachers are able to engage in a personalized exchange of ideas based on readings. Students' meaning making from readings could incorporate personal responses to the context. The journal entries also allow teachers to assess understanding while monitoring students' connections with the text and sharing opinions, ideas, conclusions, and questions in an ongoing conversation about newly acquired knowledge.

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation. A contemporary model of motivation is the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009) which outlines five constructs of motivation. This model includes the constructs of empowerment, usefulness, success, interest, and caring. Each of the components is based on students' perceptions of the construct in relation to a given task. Empowerment refers to students' ability to make choices in their learning. Usefulness is the students' view of whether or not the concepts being learned are related to one's personal goals. Success is the perception of whether or not a student feels they can do well. Interest includes both the situational and personal interests of students, and caring refers to the perception of care the student feels from the teacher and other students in the child's learning environment. Jones (2009) has also developed an inventory based around the MUSIC Model for teachers to use in determining students' perceptions about motivational constructs. The

inventory is meant to be a reflective tool for teachers to obtain insight into students' affective reactions to a task, the results of which could be used in future lesson planning.

Some components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009) are similar to mini-theories in motivational research. The components of usefulness and success are targeted in the Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The researchers explain the effects on motivation as a result of students' perceptions of how successful they expect to be on a task combined with the value or usefulness they perceive the task to have.

Within the various mini-theories that exist in motivational research for the educational setting, the MUSIC Model (Jones, 2009) represents the most comprehensive model by including five distinct motivational constructs. Although some of these five constructs are discussed in other mini-theories, this model pulls the ideas from these various theories together by creating a model with multiple constructs. The model is presented in a way along with the inventory that could be used in the practical setting and easily understood by both researchers and practitioners. Based on these conclusions, I will address research relating to literacy motivation in particular, by connecting back to the constructs of this model.

Literacy research focused on motivation. The motivational research ideas and models discussed thus far reflect understandings of motivation in relation to students within the instructional setting. Expectations and personal engagement with reading tasks modeled by educators, have a positive impact on the reading engagement of students (McCool, 2015). Specific studies have been completed to better understand how these motivational constructs impact literacy tasks with students.

Student Perceptions. Clark (2009) conducted a study in which participants completed a survey about their attitude towards writing. Writing survey results in Clark's (2009) article,

resulted in over half of the participants taking the stance of "not a lot" or "not at all" in terms of enjoying writing. The survey used included 10 statements about writing in which participants were to choose their position on a four-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with an additional scale option of don't know. The survey was given to second, third, and fourth graders in England and Scotland in 2009. In reporting the results, she found the sample to be fairly evenly split between those who felt they were good or very good at writing as compared to those who aligned themselves as could be better or not good at writing. Based on these results, approximately half of young writers find writing to be low in the motivational constructs of interest and success.

Looking at motivation in relation to reading within the literacy classroom, research shows that females are generally more motivated to read than males and the motivation to read for all students tends to decrease with age starting at the elementary level (Applegate & Applegate, 2011). Although the focus of these authors is reading motivation, much as their article highlights students responses to reading, which relates back to the oral and written tasks assessing student learning from reading. Applegate and Applegate (2011) sampled 443 students ranging from second to sixth graders. One interesting note made in the study was that students were able to analyze and make judgments in everyday life. The researchers found that these same analytic abilities were not being transferred into classroom literacy tasks either by lack of students' transferability with the skillset or lack of expectation for these skills by teachers. Related to this idea, the researchers found a significant increase in motivation when students were expected to respond thoughtfully to literature, suggesting that these are related factors. Student engagement in making text connections based on personal experiences and level of intellectual challenge

presented in literacy activities were other findings identified as related factors for increasing motivation.

Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller, & Wigfield (2012) reviewed research on the constructs of reading motivation for young learners to better understand the relationship between reading motivation and reading competence. One important critique of the authors in their review of research was the reliance on self-report questionnaires for data collection regarding students' attitudes toward reading. Questionnaires such as the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MQR) developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey developed by McKenna and Kear (1990) are examples of the self-report tools used for collecting data on students' motivation to read. Schiefele et al. (2012) note that although much of the research is focused on findings from these types of questionnaires, "research is largely in agreement with respect to the major dimensions of reading motivation" (p. 437). They also note that these questionnaires generally focus on habitual reading habits meaning that students respond with regards to their overall reading habits, not taking into consideration current or situational reading motivation that may be exhibited during one particular reading task. With this understanding of the questionnaire results, Schiefele et al. (2012) found "that habitual reading motivation affects the quality of strategic processing while reading.

To more clearly define habitual readers or habitual reading habits, these are reading strategies and habits occurring within a student who "denotes the relatively stable readiness of a person to initiate particular reading activities" (p. 429). These are students who generally enjoy reading in the free time and would be considered to have higher intrinsic motivation to read. Thus, educators would expect the reading strategies consistently used by habitual readers to be more advanced than non-habitual readers. Research reviewed by Schiefele et al. (2012)

however, found that sufficient evidence to conclude this relationship between intrinsic motivation (generally a quality of habitual readers) and strategy use while reading was not substantial. The researchers did note that weaknesses in the study structure, such as not taking extrinsic motivation into account, could have led to the lack of substantial results. Later in their article, they did acknowledge that studies focusing on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and reading competence (reading comprehension) confirmed a moderately positive relationship.

Based on these researchers review of past studies, there is no substantial relationship between intrinsic motivation to read and strategy use while reading; however, there is moderately positive relationship between intrinsic motivation to read and reading competence. This means students who generally enjoy reading and choose to partake in reading activities in their spare time are competent readers but do not necessarily show strength in using reading strategies. Qualitative studies taking a closer look at how students respond to texts could reveal more about strategies being used and add clarity to these relationships as opposed to data collected from self-report questionnaires.

Substantial relationships exist between reading attitude and reading competence (Schiefele et al., 2012). Deconstructing reading attitude further, Greaney and Neuman (1990) focus on three incentives in the reading process including utility, enjoyment, and escape. Utility refers to the students reading with purpose, such as reading to learn more about a particular concept. Enjoyment of reading includes students' positive feelings of interest, excitement, and enjoyment that can result from reading. Lastly, escape refers to reading to avoid boredom or for lack of something better to do. Although this last incentive does not sound positive, it can allow

students a distraction or method of relaxation by allowing them to overcome adverse feelings by escaping to the alternative scenarios depicted in literature.

Teachers' Perceptions. Reiterating the importance of attaching personal meaning to literacy tasks is noted by Miller and Meece (1999) along with the idea that students should be exposed to high expectations in their responses to literacy. Activating prior knowledge and continually making personal connections during literacy tasks is discussed by many researcher in terms of literacy achievement and motivation (Calkins, 2003; Graves, 1984; Miller & Meece, 1999; Oldfather, 1993).

Other articles focus on writing from the teacher's perspective (as opposed to the students' perspective). Graves (1978) in a short commentary published in *Language Arts*, reflected on a particular teacher's journey in changing her approach to teaching writing. He noted that productive writing instruction occurs when the learner teaches the instructor about a personal topic of interest while the instructor teaches the learner how to write. Relating back to Clark's (2009) survey results, this teaching approach could help in increasing both student interest and success by allowing them to write about topics in which they feel competent.

Students' and teachers' perceptions. Bringing together the student and teacher perspectives, input, outcomes, and attitudes toward literacy learning, Oldfather (1993) concludes that motivation for literacy results from dynamic classroom shift. This shift involves the sharing of knowledge ownership between student and teacher, and an epistemological teacher view aligned with constructivism. To elaborate, she explains that this is done through encouraging students to consider and explore parallel possibilities of understanding and develop what she calls "epistemological empowerment." During her extensive study, Oldfather worked as a participant observer in a fifth- and sixth-grade classroom of 31 students. Data collection was

completed through classroom visits, observations, and interviews to better understand a classroom environment designed at fostering student generation of knowledge, ownership in learning, and real-life connections to school concepts within a whole language setting.

When delving further into the idea of epistemological empowerment, Oldfather (1993) offers the following definition: "a sense of intellectual agency and ability to know that emerges from a strong sense of the integrity of one's own processes of constructing meaning" (p. 5). Empowerment is giving power to or enabling (Empower, 2015). Teachers can empower students in different ways based on how this definition is interpreted. Empowerment as discussed in the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009) addresses students' perception of being able to make decisions and have choices in their learning. In this sense, teachers empower students by enabling them to make choices and decisions in the activities they complete. Oldfather (1993), on the other hand, uses empowerment to address students' perception of strength related to their ability to analyze and synthesize information in generating knowledge and creating an individual, justified stance to be shared with others. In this sense, teachers empower students by providing opportunities for constructing and viewing their understandings and opinions as valuable. Students then have been enabled to think individually and place credibility in their thoughts and the benefits of sharing understandings with others.

Connecting this idea with literacy practices, Oldfather (1993) notes the use of self-expression as a motivator for students. Self-expression would be a motivating considered a motivating factor for the construct of empowerment as explained by both Oldfather (1993) and Jones (2009). By providing students with opportunities to write, speak, and create representations of their knowledge and understandings, students were able to share their thoughts, feelings, and interests as they made personal connections to classroom concepts

(Oldfather, 1993). Interviews with students included statements about increased motivation resulting from cognitive and affective connections brought forth while engaging in literacy practices of self-expression.

Oldfather concluded that students were genuinely excited about writing and even talked during interviews about writing outside of school. It seemed that when literacy activities focused on self-expression, students felt connected to their work and were more engaged. She also found that teachers held high expectations for student explanations of thought. Further, the teacher created a safe environment for learning that emphasized individual knowledge understandings and teachers held a flexible view of curriculum as compared with students supplying a right answer. Oldfather also notes in the closing of her article that more research, both theoretical and practical, focusing on social constructivism and literacy motivation would be beneficial.

Conclusion. In relating the Oldfather (1993) article to writing instruction, dialogue journals could be one way for teachers to introduce self-expression as a reading response activity. Dialogue journals can be used without specified topics or as a guided tasks and will be explained in further detail later. When using dialogue journals in my previous classrooms, students wrote as a morning work assignment and were able to choose their writing topic. I have not used dialogue journals as a tool for assessing meaning making during literacy or literature encounters during content area instruction; however, based on the articles presented here, it is clear that they would be a great classroom asset. By utilizing dialogue journals in the content areas, teachers could encourage many aspects of motivation mentioned in the previously reviewed research articles such as expectations for intellectual understanding and explanations, connections between text and personal experiences, and the interaction through conversation between the student and teacher. Dialogue journals as a writing tool for self-expression would

also allow students to express their literacy transactions with texts as explained earlier in

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Literacy (1978). Before looking at the details and

implementation of dialogue journals as a tool to connect Rosenblatt's theory with research

related to increasing student motivation, a review of research on writing instruction is necessary.

Writing is an essential literacy skill and has been much thought as to the effectiveness of

teaching methods and assessment techniques.

Writing Instruction

Writing has been researched in the field of education for quite some time providing

researchers and practitioners alike an overwhelming amount of resources for best practices.

Modeling. Modeling is often done by teachers in elementary classrooms to present

students with a clear example of how to complete a given task. With writing instruction,

teachers can model by doing a think aloud where they use writing strategies to create a text on

chart paper or some displayable format allowing students to observe the teacher using and

reflecting on strategies and addressing possible writing problems (Tompkins, 2012). According

to Graves (1983), modeling is a crucial component of writing instruction allowing the teacher to

engage in the act of writing thus increasing awareness of the process and better helping students

as they engage in similar acts. Another important aspect of teacher modeling with reference to

writing instruction is having students view the teacher going through the same process in which

they are about to engage. Atwell (1998) notes that she was anxious about revealing her writing

to her students; however, this vision of writing being a challenging process, even for a teacher,

allows for a deeper mentoring relationship. By the teacher engaging in the writing process, the

relationship with students is enriched through creation of common ground between teacher and

students established through struggles experienced by writers.

Pre-Writing. After the teacher has modeled writing, it is the students' turn to engage in the writing process by choosing a topic as they enter the pre-writing stage. Writing topics are sometimes the choice of the teacher in the case of an assigned prompt. As will be discussed later when looking at motivational constructs, students' motivation is related to empowerment or choice. This same sentiment of choice in writing is a strong belief of Graves (1983). By giving students choice, teachers allow students to choose topics of interest which is another motivational construct that will be discussed later. Ideas for helping student brainstorm topic choices include Calkins (2003) pre-planning strategies focused around seed stories. Calkins uses the metaphor of seeds in a watermelon to assist students in focusing on one event for their writing instead of covering an entire experience, weekend, or trip. Students could begin by brainstorming the many "seed" story ideas that are within their "watermelon" experience and then choose one to focus their writing on for that draft. The pre-writing stage can include drawings, talking with others, or using graphic organizers as possibilities meant to help students generate and organize their ideas before beginning their first draft (Tompkins, 2012).

Drafting. The drafting stage of the writing process begins with students' creation of a rough draft. The goal of this draft is to get the ideas of the student down on paper with content as the main focus (Graves, 1983; Tompkins, 2012). This stage can again be modeled by the teacher helping build an understanding for students that rough drafts are a starting point. Teachers can model the importance of focusing on getting down ideas while not fixating on spelling or grammatical errors. Tompkins (2012) suggests students double-space rough drafts so that there is room to make revision or editing notes in later stages of the writing process. Labeling the paper "rough draft" can also remind students that the draft will be reread, shared,

conferenced about, revised, and edited as they continue through the writing process with this piece.

Revising and editing. Within writing instruction, revising and editing are often grouped together in classroom teaching. The idea of revising focuses more on composing thoughts in a clear way and conveying meaning through one's writing. Editing, on the other hand, focuses on conventions, spellings, paragraph format, etc. Revision should begin by looking specifically at information and ideas the author wants to share with readers and later focus on editing drafts with fine-tuned mechanical skills (Graves, 1983). Tompkins (2012) also comments that teachers must make the distinction between revising and editing clear to students. Teachers can begin working on the clarification and refinement of ideas achieved through revision as early as first grade, helping students understand how to make adjustments to fit the needs of the reader (Tompkins, 2012).

Once students' revisions are complete, editing for a final draft can begin. Graves (1983) comments on editing, noting that editing should be guided by the teacher and targeted to the individual student's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This gets at the importance of teachers knowing their students on an individual level. Understanding what the child notes as incorrect allows the teacher insight so that editing can be focused on skills "within the framework of his [the student's] perception (Graves, 1983, p.122)." This same idea for editing is expressed by Atwell (1998) as she explains her timing for giving advice and suggestions to be based on when she recognizes that a child is unsure of how to achieve a particular effect or if they seem stuck. Regardless of the particular mechanical skill focused on during editing, there is a clear shift in focus from content to conventions during this stage of the writing process. Tompkins (2012) refers to this step as "putting the piece of writing into its final

form" (p.12). Many researchers discuss the proofreading which takes place during editing in a similar manner and all point out the difference between revision and editing.

  Sharing and publishing. Sharing students' writing is also important in the development of young authors. Teachers should treat student created writing in the same manner as other literature shared in the classroom, encouraging students to critically evaluate authors and then transfer that critical eye to their own writings (Graves, 1983).

  An article by Heyer (2009) reflecting on his experience using book publishing with his eighth-grade students, notes the increase in student engagement resulting from the announcement of the publishing project. Heyer made publishing in a class book, available for purchase online, an option for the semester's final writing assignment. When announcing the publishing part of the project to his students, he found they immediately began inquiring about details and availability of the book. Increased engagement in writing was evident by students asking additional peers to review their work and turning to the teacher for improvement suggestions instead of confirmation of being finished. Heyer also noted that the idea of students' work being in a published format available to the public through online purchase made the purpose for revision and editing more authentic; thus, students showed more concern for using correct conventions and having a polished final piece free of errors. In reflecting on the project, Heyer felt students were more invested in the project than students from past years who had not had the publishing option. He also stated that, "seeing your work in print, and the knowledge that future readers will enjoy your work will encourage students to enjoy writing" (p. 63). Overall, Heyer's experience with publishing the work of his eighth grade students resulted in increased student motivation in the writing process and student views of themselves as proud, published authors.

One component of this process noted by Heyer (2009) is that of published work being publicly available. Students must acknowledge that writing is completed with the intent of telling one's story to multiple audiences and that the text can outlast their lifetime giving their words purpose and importance for years to come (Graves, 1983). Knowing that a piece of writing will be shared with an audience is motivating for students as they work to continually improve their work along with helping them envision themselves as authors (Tompkins, 2012). Although not all student writings need to be revised and edited to the point of publication, allowing students to experience this process with some of their writing allows for pride in a bound, final form of hard work ready to share with others.

The writing experience. To gain a better understanding of each of the previously discussed parts of the writing process, teachers must experience the process and difficulties of writing. Many researchers of writing instruction point to the significance of writing alongside students. Even those who do not stress the importance of this act occurring in the classroom, feel that writing teachers should be writers themselves and experience composition every day in order to truly understand their students' feelings and challenges related to writing. Atwell (1998) commented on her experiences at *Bread Loaf*, a summer writing program for English teachers, clarifying her choices as a writer as she began to analyze her own steps in the composing process. I was able to relate with Atwell based on my writing experiences during the Blue Ridge Writing Program Summer Institute, a branch of the National Writing Project (NWP). Having to write daily, share, get feedback from others and contemplate revisions based on how your message was received can be eye opening to the tasks and expectations we place on our students.

The components of the writing process, as well as teachers writing alongside students are goals for writing instruction that could be used across the curriculum. With writing across the

curriculum; however, teachers may focus on these parts to different extents. Excluding certain parts when necessary for informal writing, and making other modifications appropriate to fit the needs of the students and the types of writing tasks being encountered are decisions dependent upon the lesson.

Writing standards. The number of states adopting Common Core makes the push for national standards evident. During the 2013-2014 school year, 45 out of 50 states had adopted Common Core (NGA Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). A study by Stauffer and Mason (2013) investigating professional stressors of elementary school teachers, noted that many teachers commented on standardized testing as part of the political and educational structures leading to their stress as well as the stress of students. The push for teaching strictly to the standards and intensely focusing on student achievement that is measurable through standardized testing has placed an increased amount of stress on teachers. State writing tests at the elementary level are administered in some (but not all) states within the United States; however, standards-based reading assessments are present in all states, placing measureable reading achievement as a top priority for educators. Teachers must find a balance between the standards and formal assessments and their personal pedagogical views which may be overridden by state or county requirements (Noddings, 2013).

Writing standards are explicitly listed within Common Core and are broken down into domains: "(a) text type and purposes; (b) production and distribution of writing; (c) research to build on present knowledge; and (d) range of writing" (NGA Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). It is expected that these standards will be broken into learning objectives incorporated in all content areas. This brings about the idea of more writing tasks being integrated into content area lessons. Although this idea appears reasonable and

valuable to many teachers, the already rigorous content area curriculum makes adding any type of activity seem infeasible (Rosaen, 1990).

Assessing writing. Writing can be informally assessed in ways such as observing and conferencing with students about their writing progress, using process and/or product measures such as rubrics, and administering standards-based writing assessments from the district or state (Tompkins, 2012). Graves (1983) also notes the importance of writing assessment, but focuses much on the qualitative attributes of student writing. He suggests keeping up with student progress through qualitative data collection such as checklist, records of conferencing, and anecdotal notes. Also within his discussion of assessment, is the importance of collecting this data short term, such as weekly, and long term, showing growth over the school year, which should all be used in meeting with students, parents, and administrators to discuss progress. Based on these ideas for assessing writing, with the exception of mandated writing tests, teachers are judging student progress and keeping records of what appears to be very qualitative and subjective views or proficiency. Even with the use of rubrics, teachers may vary in their opinion of what constitutes a certain score or level of proficiency related to skills on the rubric. Studies requiring teachers to include written feedback related to rubric scores could shed more light on the subjective differences existing in educators' idea of proficient writing.

Writing, therefore, is complex and difficult to assess because of differing views for what makes writing "good." Nauman, Stirling, and Borthwick (2011) conducted a study in which teachers and professional writers were given 31 statements regarding assessment of writing similar to statements that could appear on a writing scoring rubric. The participants were to group and order the individual statements based on their importance achieving a distinguished piece of work. The researchers found that there seemed to be three distinct perspectives on

assessing writing, divided based on their emphasis on good (a) thinking and communicating; (b) structure and clarity; and (c) purpose, voice and correctness. These categories of assessors differed based on the importance they placed on writing techniques such as clarity of meaning and thoughts of the writer, use of correct grammar and conventions, and purposeful manipulation of tone and voice to affect the reader. Based on these findings, assessing writing is somewhat subjective and the given score for any students could vary based on the assessor and their definition of distinguished writing. Interestingly, even professional writers and classroom teachers participating in the study were mixed within the three groupings of what constitutes good writing.

Content area writing. Literacy is also part of content area lessons and therefore, teachers should utilize reading and writing instructional strategies while teaching content-specific lessons. Daniels and Zemelman (2004) note that "reading is an active, constructive process" (p. 23) and offer thinking strategies for readers to use in content-based literacy tasks to improve comprehension. Focusing on literacy skills in the content areas, Daniels and Zemelman's explanation of the mental process of reading occurring in content area lessons is similar to Rosenblatt's acknowledgement that reading ignites individual experiences for students determined by their past experiences and prior knowledge. Although Daniels and Zemelman focus mainly on reading skills and strategies, writing instruction and tasks assigned in the content areas would inevitably require the same purposeful planning and instructional strategies to scaffold student learning.

Writing is a task which requires higher level thinking moving students into the "creating" level of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Completing this higher level thinking in content areas

allows students to formalize and crystalize their new understandings, benefiting not only the student but also providing an assessment tool for teachers (Walley & Kommer, 2000).

In discussing content area writing Walley and Kommer (2000) state, "…teachers should use writing to help students understand material, formulate their thinking about a subject, and express their views to others" (p. 233). This changes the learning objective of writing from a focus on improving writing skills to instead improving understanding and the ability to use writing as a communicative tool. Writing requires an individual to organize their thinking into complete thoughts able to be read and understood by an audience. Utilizing literacy components in content area lessons increases content understandings and retention of information and is recommended for use by content area teachers (Lacina & Watson, 2008).

One example for using writing in the content areas is explained by Daniels and Zemelman (2004) in their activity titled, "Written Conversation" (p. 130). Within this after reading activity, students write back and forth to a partner in short intervals about a completed reading, lesson, or topic. After the back and forth writing has occurred a few times, partners are given time to discuss the content before engaging in a class discussion as well. This writing activity is viewed as a way of having students reflect and organize their thoughts before participating in whole group discussion.

The use of these types of literacy activities is necessary in content area lessons. Lent (2009) explains, "teachers can ensure that their students know how to comprehend texts and media in various disciplines by showing them how mathematicians, scientists, historians, or poets read, write, and think" (p. 36). As explained earlier and again in this quote, content area teachers have the responsibility of teaching literacy as a part of their content-based lessons. The following sections include examples of writing activities integrated across the curriculum, an

expectation of Common Core (NGA Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Integrating writing in the mathematics curriculum. A study examining mathematical understandings had students respond to open writing prompts to explaining various concepts such as subtraction and fractions (Aspinwall & Aspinwall, 2003). The study found few responses that portrayed conceptual understanding and multiple examples showing limited or procedural understanding among the fifth grade participants. In summarizing the importance of their findings, the authors noted, "open-ended prompts give teachers valuable insight into students' perceptions and knowledge, information that is essential for planning effective instruction" (Aspinwall & Aspinwall, 2003, p.353).

Integrating writing in the science curriculum. Nonfiction writing activities focusing on students' developing knowledge in science were suggested by Akerson and Young (2005) to advance student thinking and offer assessment of students' understandings to teachers. The authors give examples for nonfiction writing activities including science journals, inference charts, student-authored books, ABC books, emails to scientists, and reports. When discussing student-authored books, it was suggested that students revise and edit so that these may become published informational texts available in the classroom library. An intriguing asset to the journals included students being able to "track their ideas over time and note any observations that lead to a change in inference" (p. 38). This takes the higher level skills required of writing in content areas to a new level by having students reflect and map their changes in understandings.

Implementing writing in the social studies curriculum. Camicia and Read (2011) conducted a qualitative study with 50 pre-service teachers partnered with 50 elementary school

students using weekly dialogue journals in response to *Time for Kids* articles on public issues. Participants would read the article and then respond to the reading using the dialogue journal which was then passed back and forth on a weekly basis between the pre-service teacher and elementary student. Through the dialogue journal, the participants discussed the contents of the text as well as engaged in a conversation about current political and social issues. The researchers found entries to show formation of opinions, comprehension of texts, and development of critical literacy skills in students. By using dialogue journals in the social studies classroom, students were able to have conversations about new knowledge, increasing their understandings by associating topics to a social context. The dialogue journals, used in the parameters of this study, allowed students to "not only be consumers of information; they were also learning how to negotiate meanings and differences of perspectives through their writing" (p. 30). This aided in the conclusion that students are capable of conversing and deliberating about public issues, a skill necessary in a democracy.

These studies offer a few examples for integrating writing into content area topics. When integrating writing in the content areas, teachers should be careful to plan tasks that require students to engage in higher level thinking skills and promote idea development (Rosaen, 1990).

Conclusion. Writing instruction has been studied for many years in an attempt to improve the effective implementation of writing tasks with students (Calkins, 1986, 2003; Graves, 1983; Tompkins, 2012). The process of writing has been broken down allowing teachers and researchers to grasp the complex task of writing. Methods for teaching the various stages of the writing process have been researched and reported on in a how-to format (Calkins, 2003) while other researchers (Graves, 1983; Tompkins, 2012) offer general strategies for teaching writing in the classroom and helping students develop themselves as authors.

Whether in the language arts classroom or the content areas, teachers need to plan and implement strategies for teaching writing in an effort to help students better comprehend the format and structure of various texts while advancing their literacy skills. Some examples of integrating writing in the content areas were discussed in this section. As the next section begins, the focus will shift to dialogue journals, one specific way of integrating writing in the content areas. Dialogue journals have been chosen as a focus for the remainder of this chapter and for use in this study because of the qualities such as continuous communication, personal reflection, and sharing of ideas with others that help use writing as a tool to connect the Transactional Theory of Literacy with motivational constructs to increase student engagement and bring awareness to the aesthetic reading responses of students.

Dialogue Journals

Journaling is one type of informal writing that can be readily integrated into content area activities. As in the social studies example discussed earlier, dialogue journals can be used for students to respond and interpret informational texts. Journaling can take many forms; however, as in the earlier example and for this section of my paper, the focus will be on dialogue journals. This type of journaling requires students to write and then be responded to by someone else, creating a conversation of knowledge through the journal entries. Responses to journal entries are most often between student and teacher, or student and student.

Responding to literature through journaling aims to have students "react personally to books, become excited about reading, and want to read more" (Wollman-Bonilla &Werchadlo, 1995, p. 563). The key components of dialogue journals include personal experiences of the student shared through responses and the conversation created about experiences when the journal is shared with someone else (Salcedo, 2009).

Literary transactions made apparent through dialogue journals. Experiences allowing students to continually construct or reconstruct knowledge can result from literary transactions. The idea of reading responses resulting from individual transactions with literature explain the possibility of students encountering new experiences through their texts interactions. As students have literary transactions, they make interpretations based on their prior knowledge and experiences which differ from student to student. Students can therefore have new experiences vicariously through the characters and events of texts. These vicarious experiences, just like real-life experiences, could prompt the reconstruction of existing assumptions.

Bean and Rigoni (2001) explored reading response journals by analyzing journals among 10 participants. The participants included five high school sophomores and five university students with each high school student being paired with a university student. Throughout the study, participants had reciprocal conversations based on a text chosen by the researchers. The text, focusing on ethnicity issues, was chosen by the researchers to create case studies that could add to the knowledge of using multicultural texts and intergenerational dialogue journal writing to better understanding reading responses related to social issues. The researchers found that over the course of the study, students engaged in critical discussions moving toward a constructivist stance in which 12 final categories of dialogue focus were determined through content analysis. In displaying results, a table displayed the top three content analysis categories that emerged within each partner group. Within the five groups, ethical considerations appeared in the top three list for four of the five partner groups. Categories within each group varied based on the distinctive differences in interactions of the conversations which are explained in further detail in Bean and Rigoni's (2001) article. In closing, the authors noted that the book read

by students in the study was viewed by participants as socially significant with journal entries showing evidence of disequilibrium and sometimes contradictory interpretations of social issues.

The results of the study discussed further highlight the ideas of disequilibrium and accommodation addressed in Piaget's constructivism. As the students engaged in written dialogue with others reading the same text, interpretations differed based on students' prior knowledge and experience. Individual schemes were reflected on, modified, or reaffirmed through the individual's text interpretation and again through views (sometimes contradictory) of another reader's interpretation shared through written discourse.

Dialogue journals as a writing tool for recording reading responses. The use of dialogue journals is one method for encouraging reader response through written discourse. Relating back to the Transactional Theory of Literacy, Rosenblatt (1978) notes that a reader's ultimate goal is generally to extract knowledge from text leading to a more efferent reading; however, she notes that the act of reading is not an either-or position in terms of efferent or aesthetic stance. While a reader may have a more efferent focus, the reader may still be aware of the aesthetic qualities of a text (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Just as discussed earlier in the writing section, modeling is important in guiding elementary students with higher level thinking processes and setting high expectations for completing tasks. To connect this back to the efferent and aesthetic continuum, a teacher may need to model the difference in these reading stances as well as the importance of each. Often the information extracted from an efferent stance of reading is assessed in the elementary setting through comprehension questions. Dialogue journals, on the other hand, can provide a method for students to also recognize and record aesthetic responses to the same text. In the elementary

setting, this may need to be modeled and structured for students as they begin to use dialogue journals for this purpose.

Dionisio (1991) found that immersing herself as a reader and writer in her classroom and using dialogue journals with students about texts allowed the students to feel safe and personally express themselves and discover their own ideas while reading. She also found herself surprised by the literary elements such as theme that students were discussing and connecting their own lives as they reflected in the dialogue journals. Matthews and Chandler (1998) restructured their high school social studies classrooms to integrate Rosenblatt's reader response ideas. Their text assignments were restructured to be reader-oriented and include reactions, dialogue with others at different points in the lesson, and independent writing journals. Both studies found the use of dialogue and individual literacy transactions to be critical in helping students comprehend text and express their understandings.

Personalized meaning-making categories emerging in student journals. Response journals often include entries related to personal connections, connections to other literary works, and students' critique of the author and story elements (Atwell, 1998). These entry topics are similar to the immersion and self-involvement categories discussed in the findings section of Hancock's (1993) study. Like Hancock, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) found two types of responses in analyzing first-graders' journal responses to a fictional children's book. These types included text-centered and reader-centered responses, showing a differentiation between students' understandings and connections made while reading. Findings showed increased reader-centered responses with less text-centered responses over the course of the school year.

Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) also analyzed responses based on student academic ability. The researchers found that despite differences in literacy skills such as writing and vocabulary, students were all able to make meaningful connections to the texts with the only difference in responses (based on ability) being longer entries from stronger readers. Regardless of differences in responses and length, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo noted that the journal responses indicated students' understanding in such a way that comprehension questions were unnecessary.

Teacher responses in student dialogue journals. When responding to dialogue journals, teachers must keep the key purposes of meaning making and creating a conversation about experiences and interactions with new knowledge at the forefront of their mind. This requires being careful not to evaluate journal entries in the same way as evaluating formal writing assignments. "For the moment, the teacher puts aside a concern for mechanics, missing information, and revising to help children get words on paper" (Graves, 1983, p.105). Teacher responses should position teachers as a full participate in conversations aimed at making meaning based on the experience of the student while disregarding evaluative practices such as noting mistakes in conventions (Salcedo, 2009; Tunks, 2011).

Another important aspect of teacher responses in dialogue journals is the attention to individualized responses and connections being made by students. Through dialogue journals, teachers can assess students' understandings of new material and ask questions in their response to encourage further higher level thinking as students generate new understandings. Atwell (1998) noted that her responses in students' reading journals are "personal and contextual" (p.283) and aim to "affirm, challenge, or extend a reader's responses" (p.283). In talking about writing conferences, Graves (1983) notes that "what teachers say should usually be based on

what the child last said (p.103)." Both Atwell and Graves again point out the necessity of teachers responding individually and personally to dialogue journal entries.

When discussing conferencing with students about writing, Graves (1983) categorizes the types of questioning used by teachers to guide students. One type of questioning he described is following questions in which the teacher encourages the child to continue with their thoughts and add clarity to ideas mentioned in their writing. This same style of questioning would be appropriate as teachers respond to students in dialogue journals encouraging further explanation and elaboration to better define the meaning-making process.

Benefits for implementing dialogue journals. One asset of dialogue journals noted by Camicia and Read (2011) is the ability for input and academic conversations from students who are reserved during classroom discussions. This quality of dialogue journals is also expressed by Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) in their description of journals as a "safe context for students to express their ideas" (p.566) since the journals in this study were only between student and teacher.

Drawbacks to implementing dialogue journals. Although the benefits heavily outweigh the drawbacks according to the findings of articles read and discussed here, they are to be noted. The main concern with integrating writing through dialogue journals is the amount of time required by teachers to read and respond to each child's entries (Tompkins, 2012; Tunks, 2011).

Effects on writing skills resulting from dialogue journals. Dialogue journals are informal and provide students a genuine communication tool with their teacher to engage and connect on an individual level while advancing writing fluency (Tompkins, 2012). In asking students about their writing abilities in interviews, Salcedo (2009) found that even after the implementation of

dialogue journals, none of the students felt they were good writers. No data was collected to determine if writing fluency or skills had improved; however, even Salcedo noted in her final reflections that she wondered if the continued use of the journals would have an impact on writing self-concept.

Seminal article for use of dialogue journals. One seminal article regarding dialogue journals is that of Marjorie Hancock (1993). The study from this article is complex in that it utilizes dialogue journals over a two month period with students reading from more than one text. The researcher used multiple data collection methods including journal entries as well as interviews. Although there are limitations to the study that will be further explained later, the article represents a structured way of using and analyzing students meaning-making processes experiences during literacy transactions. The researcher's use of categories created through analyzing journal entries led to a better understanding of students' transactions while reading and how those transactions differed among students and over time with different texts. This article has been chosen as a seminal piece because of the extensive use of dialogue journals and the method in which the journal responses were analyzed to determine types of reading responses.

Review of Hancock (1993) article. Within this article, Marjorie Hancock details the case study she completed with 10 sixth graders. The students read four books over a course of two months as one assignment during their one-hour reading period of the school day. Students were asked to respond to the text through introspective journal entries in which the researcher would comment and return them to students between class meetings. At the start of the study, the researcher brought brand new composition books to students and explained their use as well as informing the students that she would read and respond to each entry. Students were assured that the teacher would not see these journals until the end of the school year since only the researcher

would be reading and responding to student entries. The researcher explained to students that completing the journals was part of a research study and the teacher would have access to the journals once the school year was over to encourage more open dialogue between the researcher and the students. The researcher choose to use the journals in this way to ensure students' understanding that their grade or view from the teacher would in no way be affected by their journal responses.

After responding to entries in a non-judgmental way, the researcher would photocopy journal pages for later data analysis. Qualitative analysis of journal pages by the researcher categorized responses as immersion, self-involvement, or detachment, with each category having subcategories to further define student understandings and connections with the text while reading. The categorization of statements aimed to better understand the meaning-making processes students undergo while reading by looking closely at their written responses. The categories of *immersion, self-involvement*, and *detachment* were created based on the qualitative analysis of journal statements and were not pre-existing, but instead categories that emerged from the journal entries.

Immersion statements referred to students' responses based on understanding of text, characters, and events. The sub-categories for *immersion* included *understanding*, *character introspection*, *predicting events*, and *questioning*. *Self-Involvement* statements included responses in which students made personal connections with characters or events in the plot with sub-categories including *character identification*, *character assessment*, and *story involvement*. The *detachment* category included statements placing the student as a critic of the author or text and statements expressing students' thoughts deviating from the text in a divergent way. These statements fell into the sub-categories of *literary evaluation* and *reader/writer digressions*. The

categories were not predetermined but instead generated by the researcher as she analyzed student responses. The researcher commented at the end of the study that the categories were not generalizable but further research with students of different grades and abilities could help to clarify and refine the categories in helping better understand the meaning-making processes.

Based on the findings, the researcher found *character identification* categorized under self-involvement to have the highest percentage of responses and *reader/writer digressions* under the detachment category to have the fewest amount of responses. The researcher notes that the category with the highest percentage was different for each book but overall, the percentage of responses under the larger categories of *Immersion* and *Self-Involvement* were approximately equal and made up 82.6% of student responses with the remaining 17.4% coming from the detachment category. Based on these percentages, the researcher concluded that most meaning-making completed by students while reading comes from the individual struggle to understand the text and the personal connections made while reading.

The second part of Hancock's study, heavily qualitative, focused on four students from the original sample, with individual case studies of each student. In this portion of the study, the researcher analyzed journal entries, gave examples of statements for each category from the earlier analysis and included student interviews about the meaning-making process of reading explained through their journal writing. Each of the four case studies were discussed over a few pages of detailed analysis showing the uniqueness of each reader's literary transactions.

By completing a case study on these four individuals, the researcher was able to better define differences that can occur in the meaning making processes. Hancock gave category percentages for each student just as she had given totals for the group of ten. Percentages allowed the reader to see the types of meaning made by a particular student and how the

percentages changed based on the books read. The researcher also provided charts for each case study participant illustrating the variance in meaning-making categories as well as variance among books and over time throughout the study. Again, these case studies highlight the uniqueness of individuals' responses to literature.

Although the study offers insight for understanding reader responses, limitations include only being conducted at the sixth grade level, using only 10 students, all of which were ranked in the 95th percentile based on standardized reading and math testing measures, and the texts used were all realistic fiction. Through the study, the researcher does however begin to build a better understanding of students' processes of meaning-making while reading realistic fiction texts.

More studies using written discourse as a tool for recording students' meaning-making processes occurring during reading could help researchers and practitioners better understand these complex and individual transactions with literacy. Looking at the research, it is necessary to understand the Transactional Theory of Literacy, effective methods for writing instruction, and motivational research related to literacy to fully grasp the components working together when teachers use writing to acknowledge and understand reader responses.

Conclusion. Dialogue journals along with other studies discussed within this section for integrating writing in the content areas, allow for writing to be used as a tool for recording literary transactions. Encouraging discourse, whether verbal or written, about literary transactions allows students to share their understandings with others. Writing about literary transactions, especially in the format of dialogue journals, which foster a relationship among readers of a text, increase student engagement (Dionisio, 1991; Hancock, 1993). Incorporating motivational constructs into tasks to increase engagement was mentioned in many of the content area writing articles reviewed in this section. Although the researchers did not always

specifically state the lesson components used as an attempt to increase motivation, they inferred increased engagement in their findings and discussion (Camicia & Read, 2011; Hancock, 1993; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995).

Conclusion

Transactional Theory of Literacy highlights the importance of acknowledging students' individualized responses to texts. Incorporating these ideas and the other constructivist ideas incorporated in the Transactional Theory of Literacy, teachers can implement written discourse allowing students to express their responses. Using the writing research knowledge while incorporating motivational research related to education and literacy can help create the safe and engaging classroom necessary for students to share their literacy transactions with others. The uniqueness of each individual's response to a given text is part of their journey in building an understanding of their experiential world.

Through sharing these transactions, students can further reconstruct their understandings through both their interpretations and the interpretations of others representing multiple perspectives. This sharing of understandings is mentioned by Rosenblatt (1978) when she writes, "we may help one another to attend to words, phrases, images, scenes, that we have overlooked or slighted" (p. 146). Using dialogue journals to promote the aesthetic responses of content area text could lead students to recognize the different reading stances and provide another method of dialogue for discussing new or reconstructed knowledge generated from texts.

Hancock's (1993) article was chosen as a seminal piece representing research on dialogue journals because of its use of the journals for the duration of four different novels and the extensive analysis and discussion of reading response types of students from the journal entries. This study along with others discussed in the dialogue journal section make clear the opportunity

presented to teachers in using dialogue journals as an assessment tool for student understandings. By reading and analyzing students' dialogue journals, the individualized meaning making of students can be made more visible.

Unlike in Hancock's study, the use of dialogue journals in the content areas could help teachers identify personal connections and understandings related to content-specific topics. This could allow for teachers to utilize the journals as a way of helping students become aware of aesthetic responses to content-specific text while also providing the teacher with information regarding understandings, connections, and misconceptions of students as they engage with texts. Recording literary transactions in dialogue journals in which students will be responded to also could also allow for reflective thought and communication to deepen students understandings and they generate or reconstruct knowledge. Using dialogue journals in this way within the social studies classroom could be an essential tool in understanding students' meaning-making processes undergone through exposure to content-specific texts. The motivation inventory used to assess perceptions of motivational constructs related to use of dialogue journals could help teachers and researchers also be aware of the affects to motivation resulting from the implementation of dialogue journals.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study was designed to explore the written responses of dialogue journals in a fourth grade social studies classroom for the purpose of developing a better understanding of the individual meaning-making processes in students during content-based lessons. The theoretical framework of the study was based on the Transactional Theory of Literacy which explains the various responses readers have while engaging with the same texts. Meaning making that takes place through the literary transactions of students is individualized and depends on each child's prior knowledge and experience with the content (Rosenblatt, 1978). Various text types and instructional methods may be used by teachers during content-area lessons; however, there is the expectation that each student will interpret each lesson differently based on prior knowledge and experiences.

Dialogue journals were chosen as the tool for students to use in recording their lesson responses. Dialogue journals between student partners and between the teacher and students allowed for continual communication focused on the understandings developed as a result of exposure to the various instructional materials used in the classroom to introduce content-based knowledge. Student to student responses in dialogue journals occurred daily to provide a practical way of implementing this communicative, writing tool in the classroom. The classroom teacher responded to students on a weekly basis in order to keep the time commitment of the teacher reasonable.

By taking time during the lesson to respond to texts and to others in this way, students could begin engaging in reflective thought which required the student to reconsider a topic multiple times from various views as to fully comprehend the significance of a topic through

giving it deliberate and thoughtful attention (Dewey, 2011). Through journaling about one's

texts transactions and then responding and being responded to by a classmate, students were

preparing for interpretations and transactions in new situations based on their continual

constructing and restructuring of knowledge (Dewey, 2011). Therefore, dialogue journals as

used in this study were an instructional tool encouraging higher level thinking and constant,

individualized growth of understandings.

Because dialogue journals required the students to engage in written conversation with

others, they were used to strengthen the relationship between the teacher and the student as well

as between student dialogue journal partners. Teacher caring is a motivating construct in the

educational setting, referring to the student's perception of the extent to which the teacher cares

both personally and academically about the student's well-being (Jones, 2009; Noddings, 2013).

This motivating concept of caring also occurs among classmates which could be increased as a

result of the communication between students through using dialogue journals.

Dialogue journals were also a way of allowing students to converse about topics in which

they were unclear or had very opinionated views as well as providing a method for all students to

respond which was not always the case in other dialogue methods such as classroom discussion

(Rosenblatt, 2005). These qualities of dialogue journals could again lead to increased

perceptions of caring and possibly interest by allowing students a tool for self-expression in

which their thoughts are read and responded to by others.

Dialogue journals have been used in previous research to study student responses (Bean

and Rigoni, 2001; Dionisio, 1991; Hancock, 1993; Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo, 1995).

Many of these studies include participants at the secondary education level. Hancock's (1993)

study included sixth-grade participants and was quite extensive including journaling for four

different fictional novels and following up with individual interviews. Although these studies using dialogue journals allow researchers to better understand student meaning-making processes occurring while reading, there is a need for this type of study to be completed at the elementary level and with content-specific text.

Research Questions

In order to address the needs found in the existing research, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. How do written responses of fourth-grade students made in dialogue journals express students' understandings of content-based lessons?

2. To what extent do dialogue journals motivate students in content-based lessons? My goal for completing this study was to provide a detailed analysis of the types of student responses occurring as students at the fourth-grade level transacted with social studies texts. By gaining a better understanding of students' responses to texts, researchers and teachers may gain insight as to how students are connecting with content-specific literacy, students reading stance while reading content-specific literacy (efferent/aesthetic), and the affects to students' perceptions of motivation resulting from use of dialogue journals in social studies lessons.

Participants

Students. The participants for this study include 13 fourth graders (6 females, 7 males) from an elementary school in the Commonwealth of Virginia. All participants are students within one classroom at a K-5 elementary school. Fourth grade was chosen for the study based on the standards within the social studies curriculum at this grade level. Upper elementary grades begin to focus on content further removed from communities as is the focus in grades K-

3. The fourth grade social studies curriculum is based on increasing student knowledge of state history.

When looking at the cognitive abilities of young learners, explicit comprehension, referring to basic interpretation, is achievable; however, inferred comprehension and understanding made through inferences, is more difficult (Sousa, 2005). Sousa differentiates between preschool, preadolescent, and adolescent stages and further explores the developmental steps students encounter within stages throughout his book. Within the preadolescent stage, students work to achieve comprehension abilities in which they are able to make inferences and interact with texts to make meaning (Sousa, 2005). The transition of 'learning to read' as opposed to 'reading to learn' is also addressed and backed by other researchers as being a skill students should acquire by the end of third grade (Sousa, 2005). This means that students are ready to learn advanced literacy skills, including critical literacy, based on being proficiently literate as assessed through their skills to read, understand, use comprehension strategies, connect to prior knowledge and experiences, and write.

As explained later in the methods section, the use of dialogue journals generated data of students' literacy responses for this study. Students responded to social studies lessons in their dialogue journals as a reflective practice throughout each lesson and then were responded to individually by the teacher through a weekly written response. This reflective practice used in content-based dialogue journals required students to think about what they learned and to actively use these literacy skills including critical literacy (Sousa, 2005). Engaging in this type of writing asks student to be metacognitive. Based on this and the suggestion of Sousa that students have mastered basic literacy and are ready for critical literacy skills at the end of third

grade, fourth grade is the ideal age for focusing upon and supporting development of students' ability to apply these cognitive skills.

One struggle with students using literacy skills in the content areas is the use of a single text for a topic instead of the multi-leveled texts used to teach students to read in earlier grades (Sousa, 2005). Kuhn, Black, Keselman, and Kaplan (2000) note the developmental hierarchy of cognitive skills obtainable by students through explicit teaching that are crucial for meta-level advancements and new knowledge construction occurring through inquiry learning. They also point out that although inquiry-based activities are most often introduced in the elementary and middle school years, the ability of students to make inferences from these experiences and then apply those inferences lacks educational research. Whether teachers are using texts, inquiry-based activities, or other teaching methods, Sousa (2005) also notes the difficulty of understanding content-based knowledge due to students' individual schemata. His example of learning and answering questions about George Washington provides a model of how teachers can clarify the gap in cultural schemata between the experiences exposed to students when learning content knowledge as opposed to students' real-life experiences, making it more difficult for students to relate new material to their own experiences.

Taking these various sources into consideration, upper elementary students are expected to be able to understand, make connections, and infer relations based on their exposure to content-area knowledge, despite the awareness that difficulties are bound to exist. Having fourth-graders record their reflections to each social studies lesson within a unit could help teachers and researchers better understand the meaning-making processes and difficulties occurring in content-based lessons at the fourth-grade level. Information regarding the study's

purpose and details were sent home prior to the start of the study to obtain signed parental consent and signed student assent.

  Classroom teacher. The classroom teacher, Mrs. Frost, was also a participant in the study. Mrs. Frost is an experienced teacher and has been in fourth grade for many years. Based on observations and conversations with Mrs. Frost, she is organized, respected by colleagues, and holds high expectations for her students. During the study, she continued with lesson planning and teaching as usual without collaboration or input from me. The goal was to maintain the normal learning environment as well as planning and teaching procedures so that the implementation of dialogue journals could be seen as practical for all general education teachers at the elementary level. Responses to student dialogue journals were made by Mrs. Frost weekly to engage students in written conversation with their teacher about content-area topics. I also observed Mrs. Frost multiple times throughout the study to gain a descriptive narrative of how the dialogue journals were introduced, the terminology used when having students use the journals during lessons, and time given to students to write and respond. At the end of the second social studies unit, Mrs. Frost administered the MUSIC Inventory (Jones & Wilkins, 2013). Based on these participating acts of the classroom teacher, signed consent was obtained before the start of the study.

  Prior to the start of the study, I met with Mrs. Frost to discuss the purpose and details of the study. Certain details including, material to be used for journals, determining partners, and participation of both students and teacher in responding to entries were discussed to best meet the needs of the classroom. Mrs. Frost suggested students write three times per lesson as a replacement activity for turning and talking with a partner throughout lessons. She also planned lessons and chose the content-based texts used for the study.

Researcher. Although I did not participate in dialogue journal responses, planning, or teaching in any way, I remain one considered to be a participant. My role throughout the study was observing Mrs. Frost in how journals were introduced and used throughout social studies lessons. Documentation including consent forms and motivational inventories were collected and stored in a locked office. I also entered the classroom approximately once a week to scan copies of student dialogue journals for data analysis, which allowed me to get to know the students and for them to get comfortable with my visits. Data analysis was all completed alone after leaving the classroom. Qualitative analysis was completed through coding journal entries throughout the study. Quantitative analysis was completed by analyzing qualities of journals over time as explained later and by analyzing motivational inventories completed by students at the end of the social studies unit.

My role as the researcher remained focused on observations and data analysis throughout the study to avoid a leadership role in the classroom or implementation of dialogue journals. This was important so that the use of dialogue journals in this format can be viewed as a practical teaching method for general education teachers. In observing and analyzing data, it is important to note that while trying to remain objective, the collection of quantitative data is also somewhat subjective and was therefore effected by my previous years as a classroom teacher. I taught fourth grade for two years while in the public school system making we aware of the abilities of this age student as well as the teacher responsibilities of upper elementary teachers.

Data Collection Tools

Dialogue journals. Dialogue journal entries were one form of data generation in the study. Student dialogue journals were copied, labeled with a number, and coded. I kept the key for student numbers along with a scanned copy of each journal entry on a password-protected,

personal computer to keep confidentiality of students. In writing up study results, no student names are used to ensure confidentiality of participants. Students completed a dialogue journal approximately two times per lesson throughout both units totaling roughly 21 student dialogue journal entries per child. This data collection tool served as a method for recording students' transactions with content-based instructional materials experienced during social studies lessons.

Motivation inventories. The MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory (Jones & Wilkins, 2013) was used as a second data collection tool. This inventory was administered to students by Mrs. Frost following the final time they used the dialogue journals within the second unit. Jones and Wilkins (2013) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of the inventory to determine reliability and confirm that the five constructs of motivation represented in the inventory were separate measures of academic motivation. The inventory was tested with 1,228 undergraduate students from three different courses with the researchers concluding that there are correlations between some of the constructs; however, each of the five constructs are empirically and theoretically distinct. These results confirmed the theoretical MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009) used to create the inventory. Sigmon and Jones (2015) created a version of the MUSIC Inventory appropriate for elementary age children including fifteen statements with modified vocabulary to measure the same five motivational constructs from the MUSIC Model (see Appendix A). Jones and Sigmon (2015) validated the use of the elementary version of the MUSIC Inventory by both teachers and student teachers for determining students' perceptions of motivational constructs. This instrument was chosen for this study because it has been tested in the elementary grades and is a valid and reliable tool for collecting data about students' motivational perceptions related to a specific activity.

Field notes. Student journal entries were the primary data collection tool for qualitative data; however, field notes were used in the qualitative analysis of the study as well. Field notes were used as a secondary source of qualitative data. These notes were in the form of chronological, analytical, methodological, and observational files.

Chronological files included a copy of all types of field notes in chronological order (Bailey, 1996). These files included notes from classroom observations as well as memos written during qualitative analysis of data. Chronological files offered the researcher a source of written notes that could be reread throughout the study to gain a better idea of the big picture created from the study.

Analytical files were created based on organizational themes including items such as memos made about categories while coding (Bailey, 1996). These files, similar to coding categories, were created, combined, or subdivided as needed throughout the study. By keeping analytical files, I was able to reflect on the development of categories over time during the study. These files were also helpful in writing the findings and discussion of the study data by allowing me to look back at the thought processes for category emersion and modification.

Another type of field notes used was methodological files, which included explanations of procedures (Bailey, 1996). These files included notes that explained procedures and decisions made regarding how the study was conducted. Notes made in this category were helpful at the end of the study in reviewing the methodology section to ensure the procedures occurred as planned and to give a detailed explanation of how the study was implemented in the general education classroom.

Lastly, observational files were used which included physical surroundings, observations of members, and observations of verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Bailey, 1996). These

observational notes were taken mainly during my consecutive visits at the beginning of the study. I attended the social studies class each day of the first week of the study to take observational notes for the introduction and initial use of dialogue journals. These notes allowed me to create a detailed illustration for readers of the study in understanding how the journals were introduced and used in the classroom setting. I continued to observe approximately once a week throughout the remainder of the study to note any changes in behaviors such as use of the journals, terminology used by Mrs. Frost in referring to the journals or responses, and behaviors of students during time given to write journal entries.

Observational files including reflective notes were also made about Mrs. Frost and the classroom environment. These notes were completed after each classroom visit. I completed both observational notes taken while observing social studies lessons and notes made after leaving the classroom; therefore, these notes are not completely objective in nature.

Again, the field notes were a secondary source of qualitative data. The main reason for this secondary qualitative data source was to provide details for analysis of data and create a written record about the study. The main qualitative data source and focus of the study was the student journal entries which were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

Field notes were used as a data collection tool as well. These data were a secondary data collection tool for qualitative purposes. As explained later in the analysis section, the field notes were in various types and were kept throughout the study to provide a running record. These notes were used in capturing qualitative details of the study relating to implementation of dialogue journals, terminology used by Mrs. Frost in relation to the dialogue journals, and time given for students to write and respond.

Triangulation of data occurred through my comparing observational notes, qualitative data analysis of journal entries, quantitative data analysis of motivational inventories, analytical files, and methodological files.

Procedure

Mrs. Frost planned and taught content area lessons as usual, without any changes or suggestions from me. Prior to the study, I met with the teacher to go over the details of the study. This also allowed time to address how she introduced the dialogue journals to students. At this point, the research had been approved by IRB. Consent forms were given to Mrs. Frost at this time. The consent forms were sent home to parents/guardians and returned within one week if their child was able to participate in the study. The consent form also included assent information for the student and therefore both student and parent/guardian signed the form.

Dialogue journals were presented to students at the start of the first lesson in which students were to use the journals. Mrs. Frost instructed students to write their thoughts, feelings, and reactions throughout the social studies lessons. The exact wording suggested to Mrs. Frost for prompting students to complete entries was, "What is your response" or "Write a response." This wording was strategically thought out to avoid the teacher giving specific prompts to be answered by students. Turn and talk is a teaching method often used by teachers at the elementary level. This teaching method requires students to turn and talk with a neighbor about their learning. Dialogue journals were used in a similar manner approximately two times per lesson as a replacement for the turn and talk activity. Students responded to the lesson in their dialogue journal, switched journals with a neighbor, read and responded to the neighbor's journal, and then switched back and read the neighbor's response to their journal entry. Students were paired with the same journal partner for both social studies units.

Mrs. Frost also responded to students in their dialogue journals. For this to be a practical classroom tasks and keep the time commitment of the teacher in responding to students to a minimum, she only responded to each student on a weekly basis. Students had colored notebook paper at the back of their dialogue journal to use for communication with Mrs. Frost.

Completing dialogue journals in this way allowed students to respond to their learning individually while also connecting and discussing their thoughts and ideas with another classmate through written dialogue. Students were informed that the journal entries may also be read by Mrs. Frost and myself to help gain an understanding of how well the students understood the lesson and their thoughts about the information that was presented. The journals were not being marked for errors in punctuation, capitalization, conventions, or grammar and were not given a grade.

This use of dialogue journals was structured so that students responded to transactions with literacy approximately two times per lesson. Responses could be in any form including but not limited to a bulleted list, letter, or paragraph. The response times were decided upon by Mrs. Frost and students were given a few minutes to write and then a few minutes to respond in the dialogue journals. It was the Mrs. Frost's idea to utilize the dialogue journals in the place of turn and talk throughout lessons. With regards to Rosenblatt's implementation ideas of dialogue journals, this was more structured because students were not using written dialogue at any point in the lesson to record personal transactions. This structured approach has been chosen to guide elementary students in starting to use dialogue journals.

A copy of each child's journal for each lesson was made for data analysis. Each journal entry was scanned to a password protected computer. Student names were on the front cover of the dialogue journal and students were told not to write their names on the pages within their

journals. A code sheet was created to match each student with a number identifier. When making copies, the student's number identifier was written on the journal copies preventing any name identifiers from being on data collected.

The study included two social studies units. The first unit included 17 lessons and the second unit included 17 lessons in which students responded to using the dialogue journal. The lessons spanned a total of 34 school days.

Instructional Materials Used

During the study, Mrs. Frost taught 34 lessons in which students were exposed to non-fiction, content-based texts. Lesson objectives for the first unit were based on the following Standards of Learning (Virginia Department of Educaiton, 2012):

SOL VS.2d - Three major language groups in Virginia

SOL VS.2e - Virginia's American Indians/climate/environment

SOL VS.2f - Archaeological finds at Jamestown Island

SOL VS.2g - Current Virginia tribes

Lesson objectives for the second unit were based on the following Standards of Learning (Virginia Department of Education, 2012):

SOL VS.3a - Reasons for English colonization

SOL VS.3b - Reasons for Jamestown settlement

SOL VS.3c - Importance of Virginia charters

SOL VS.3f - Hardships at Jamestown

SOL VS.3g - Relationships of Powhatan people/English settlers

SOL VS.3d - Importance of the General Assembly

SOL VS.10a – Three branches of Virginia government (tie to elections)

SOL VS.3e - Importance of arrival of Africans/women to Jamestown

SOL VS.4 a – Importance of agriculture/influence on slavery

Text selections used during the study included textbook readings, photos of engravings, content-based leveled readers, articles found online related to the content, and an artifact collection. Mrs. Frost also used lessons in which students were exposed to web-based resources. With these lessons, students watched educational video clips, completed graphic organizers, and manipulated items on the SmartBoard to sort and assess vocabulary.

Students were asked to date their journals each day so that I could align lessons taught with student journals entries in order to determine the instructional materials used. This step was taken to allow for analysis of differences or patterns in journal entry length and changes in responses or percentages of types of responses based on instructional materials.

Analysis

Qualitative analysis of dialogue journals. Analysis of the student dialogue journals was qualitative using the constant comparative method. Constant comparative method allows a researcher to systematically analyze qualitative data through explicit coding with continued redesigning and reintegration of theoretical categories (Glaser, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). With this analytical process, categories continued to be reused, transformed, and/or generated with each stage of the analysis. When starting use of the constant comparative method, I coded the data while writing categories in the margins as they emerged. As data analysis continued, I was able to condense or delimit categories allowing for a more narrowed focus and progression towards theoretical saturation (Glaser, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Saldana, 2013). This method was appropriate for use in this study because of the continual analysis of journal entries as they were completed by students throughout the social studies units. Journal entries were

collected approximately once a week and analyzed throughout the study. By using the constant

comparative method, codes and categories from previous entries continued to be used, redefined,

or combined as necessary. This method of analysis focused on generating categories from the

data during analysis instead of having provisional categories, as is the case in analytic induction.

Based on these qualities and the continuous use and collection of dialogue journal entries for this

study, constant comparative method was a good fit for the analytical process of this particular

study.

Using the constant comparative method, open coding was used. Open coding is "the

process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data"

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). This process of analysis took place continuously during the

study. As I collected journal entries on a weekly basis, each entry was read and coded using

open coding. This type of coding is also called initial coding as the researcher takes ownership

within the research by breaking down the qualitative data of the study and identifying similarities

and differences (Saldana, 2013).

To take a closer look at how this occurred during the study, the following analytical

procedures took place. The first round, approximately one week, of dialogue journal entries

were read and coded. Once the first round of all student journals were coded, I noted common

categories among the entries. The categories emerging from the dialogue journals were created

using inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning occurs when the researcher has read the data

multiple times and begins to notice emerging categories among the data as opposed to starting

with expected categories (Rossman & Rallis, 2011; Saldana, 2013). These categories were then

used to code the dialogue journal entries students completed throughout the remainder of the

study. Notes for new categories that arose were made and tested against continuing journal

entries. By using, comparing, and adjusting categories as necessary throughout the analysis of journal entries for the unit, the constant comparative method was used.

        Quantitative analysis of dialogue journals. Quantitative analysis of the dialogue journals included word count to determine if student entries changed in length over the course of the study. Frequencies and percentages of response statements based on categories were also calculated for each lesson and unit. This data allowed for conclusions to be drawn regarding changes in types of responses over time and changes in responses based on instructional material used.

        Analysis of MUSIC Inventory. The MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory (Jones & Wilkins, 2013) was administered to students after completing their final dialogue journal entry of the second unit. Student responses to the inventory were analyzed to determine perceptions of the five motivational constructs of the MUSIC Model (Jones, 2009) specifically related to the use of dialogue journals in the content area lessons. Averages and ranges for each of the five components were calculated representing student perceptions for each of the five motivational constructs included in the inventory.

Chapter 4

Findings

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study in a fourth grade social studies classroom was to better understand students' written responses to content-based texts and to understand student perceptions about the method of using dialogue journals to record these student responses. In this chapter, findings are presented in alignment with data collection methods and tools. Observation notes are presented first to provide a holistic view of how dialogue journals were introduced and implemented in the classroom. Other field notes including notes from chronological files, analytical files, and methodological files are discussed within the qualitative analysis of dialogue journals to explain decisions made throughout the analysis of study data. Following observational notes, quantitative data analysis of dialogue journals is shared followed by the qualitative analysis of dialogue journals. Lastly, results and analysis of the motivation inventory is reported.

Observations

Observations occurred during four days at the beginning of the first unit. These observations were during the social studies period of the school day. Observations occurred approximately once every two weeks for the remainder of the study (just over two months).

General classroom environment. During social studies lessons, students got out their social studies notebooks at the beginning of each class period. The social studies notebook was a spiral-bound notebook in which students took notes during class, cutting and pasting any handouts used during class. The social studies notebook stayed in the students' desks unless they had to take them home to complete a homework assignment. During partner reading

assignments, students knew their assigned partners and quickly found a working space in the classroom to start on their task. Students were on task most of the time during all lessons regardless of the activity, materials, or format of the lesson. Students were quiet while working and raised their hands during share times.

Mrs. Frost was always easily identifiable as the leader of this classroom. Although she was often at the front of the room either teaching, working from the document camera to model, or working at her desk, she would also roam the room when students were working independently.

Journal procedures. Dialogue journals were introduced to students on the first day of a new unit. Mrs. Frost invited students to the floor and explained the procedures for using dialogue journals. She started by explaining that dialogue journals would replace "turn and talk," an activity in which students broke from the lesson to turn and discuss the information presented. Students would instead break from the lesson to write in their journal and then trade with a partner for the partner to read and respond to the initial entry. Upon starting the study, the Mrs. Frost planned to have students write approximately three times per lesson. After explaining this back and forth process, she and I modeled journaling and responding using the document camera. Students were then assigned partners by Mrs. Frost and returned to their seats. When asked about how partners were determined, Mrs. Frost explained that she decided on partners based on behavior and tried to pair boys with boys and girls with girls. She felt that students were more likely to be comfortable writing authentic reactions if paired with someone of the same gender.

Once back in their seats, dialogue journals were distributed to students. Student were reminded not to write their names on their paper when completing journals. Their names were

on the front of their journal on a sticker. Mrs. Frost then went on to explain that students would

write and respond to one another on the white notebook paper at the front of their journals. The

colored notebook paper in the back of the journal would be for her to respond to students, which

would happen weekly.

It was intended that by the second unit, students would be expected to respond in their

dialogue journals without prompting from the teacher. After discussing student entries and

responses as well as journal use during one of the weekly data collection visits, Mrs. Frost and I

determined students needed more scaffolding. Methodological notes were made to record the

teacher's comments regarding her concern that students still needed prompting to respond in

their journals and that she felt another example of model journal writing between the researcher

and teacher would be beneficial at the beginning of the second unit. She explained that she felt

many of the student responses were very basic and that modeling more in-depth responses would

benefit students. Based on these concerns, we planned a modeling activity that took place at the

beginning of the second unit.

Another methodological note made about allowing students to respond in their journals

without the prompting of the teacher included the concern for how and when students would

switch journals to respond to their partner. Because the premise of dialogue journals in this

study is for students to be able to engage in conversation about content, responding to journal

partners is necessary. This requires the teacher to stop the lesson so that students can trade

journals, respond, and trade back multiple times during a lesson. Switching dialogue journals

freely throughout the class could be distracting with this age group. Using dialogue journals in a

way more in line with the ideas of Rosenblatt would require students to respond freely

throughout the lesson but only switch and respond to their partner at the end of class or the use of

a computer program that would allow for communication to occur between students without constantly moving through the classroom.

Observations of social studies class. On the first day of using dialogue journals, students were told the topic of the new unit they were starting and given five minutes to write about the topic. During this first entry, a student raised his hand and asked Mrs. Frost how to spell a word. She addressed the entire class by letting students know they were not to worry about spelling while writing in their journals. After giving a one minute warning and allowing students to complete their initial entries, students were instructed to stand and tip-toe to their partner to switch journals. Students then returned to their seats with their partner's journal and had three minutes to read and respond. The process of switching, responding, and switching back was also smooth, with students following directions in an orderly fashion. It was clear Mrs. Frost had set clear expectations for student behavior and was very organized in planning transition times within lessons. During the allotted response time, a student commented, "This is like text messaging." This comment made clear the student's ability to connect the exchange of dialogue occurring in journals to current communication styles. At the end of three minutes, students were instructed to switch back and were given time to read their partner's response. Mrs. Frost then instructed students to place their dialogue journals in their cubbies. Journals were to be stored in students' cubbies at the end of each lesson and retrieved upon coming into the classroom from their specials class as they transitioned into social studies each day.

Observations during the first four days of the unit consistently included Mrs. Frost giving students five minutes for journals entries and two to three minutes for responses. Students were always given time to read their partner's response before continuing with the lesson. Lessons observed during the first four days included materials such as center rotations, non-fiction

readings, and the evaluation of primary sources. Other lessons in the unit included similar materials as well as hands-on activities and videos.

While taking careful notes on behaviors during the use of journals, I noted wordings used by Mrs. Frost in initiating entries in dialogue journals. She often asked students to "write a response" but sometimes gave a more scripted prompt such as explaining who they would take with them if they were on a voyage to the new world. Another observed example included "write your thoughts to this piece" after students had been given an engraving to evaluate. Based on observations and reading student dialogue journals, Mrs. Frost mainly used open-ended phrasing when having students respond in their journals with only a few instances in which students were given a more directed prompt. This conclusion is based on notes on the actual wording used by Mrs. Frost during observations, as well as the varied thoughts and facts included in journal responses within the same lesson.

Within the first few days of observations, it was clear that Mrs. Frost was not going to be able to have students write three times during each lesson as was first planned. Before beginning the study, she and I discussed logistics of using the dialogue journals with the her suggesting using the journals approximately three times per lesson. This would allow multiple times for students to respond to social studies texts as well as to each other's responses to the texts. This was also based on the average number of times students were currently given to turn-and-talk during lessons. As she actually began implementing dialogue journals, the students needed at least five minutes for initial entries and two to three minutes for responses. Along with planning time to switch journals and transition back into the lesson, each dialogue journal time was taking about ten minutes. Given the 45-minute social studies period, two journal times per day took approximately 20 minutes, leaving only 25 minutes of instructional time. Three entries within

one lesson would have resulted in more time completing journals than on lesson activities, which would have limited the content that students had to respond to in their journals. This resulted in some class periods only having one journaling time, some with two, and some with three, based on the lesson and materials used. During observations, Mrs. Frost would sometimes have a short class discussion following journaling time, allowing students to share thoughts or allowing the teacher to initiate a discussion with a more focused prompt. This added a couple more minutes to the end of the journaling activity but allowed her to maintain a more unrestricted format for journal responses while still having focused conversations about lesson topics.

Five minutes appeared to be an appropriate amount of time for students to think and write in their journals. Students were generally on task at the beginning of the journaling time, with one or two students finishing after three minutes, a couple more finishing after four minutes, many writing the entire five minutes, and a few rushing to get down the last few words as time ran out. Students were given two to three minutes to read and respond to their partner's entry. This time also seemed appropriate because many students would respond with a general response or agreement statement with little expansion or added response/opinion. Some students were more thorough with responses and would offer an expansion as to why they agreed with the initial response or offer a contradiction or reason for disagreeing with an entry. These students might have written more if given more time; however, the allotted time seemed an appropriate medium to meet the needs of both those with quick responses and those offering a more detailed response.

A few other single-occurring incidents were noted during observations. One student commented, "Can we start doing these [dialogue journals] in science too?" expressing interest in the use of journals. On one occasion, a student was absent, so Mrs. Frost substituted as the

student's journaling partner and responded during response time. This meant the student did not have a journal to respond to during this time; however, he did write and respond to the teacher. Mrs. Frost was careful to note this in the students' journal when this happened throughout both units. Another event that occurred during the first few days of the unit was the arrival of a new student. Because the new student was new to the United States and had limited English speaking and writing abilities, she did not participate in dialogue journals.

Lastly, one of the lessons I observed followed a night in which Mrs. Frost had taken home all student journals to complete the first teacher response. She returned student dialogue journals and then gave students five minutes to read and respond to her response. In talking with her during weekly visits, she had planned to respond to a few students each day so that the total time required of her was divided up throughout the week. Once the unit started, she ended up taking the journals home one night each week and responded to all students on the same night. When talking about this with her, she stated that she spent around seven minutes per child between reading what they had written and then writing a short response in the back of their journal. She estimated spending two hours a week reading and responding to student journals. Although she had planned to spread out the responses during the week, she would end up putting it off and having to take all of them home over the weekend. She completed the weekly responses to students every week except for the week of parent-teacher conference because she did not have time to allot to journals and was engaged in planning conferences. During this conversation, she and I discussed the time commitment. She expressed that at the beginning of the study, she felt that this was reasonable and still held that belief; however, both the she and I agreed that either students responding to one another or the teacher responding would be sufficient without including both. With students writing to one another as opposed to just

writing to the teacher, the teacher had more to read each week before being able to respond, which added to the time necessary for reading and responding to each child.

Summary of observation data. Overall, the observations displayed students being on task during dialogue journal parts of the lessons. It was clear that two journaling times per lesson was most appropriate for this allotted class time and grade level, with five minutes for initial responses and two to three minutes for responses. Based on the student quotes from observations, students enjoyed the dialogue journal activity and were able to make connections between using dialogue journals and current technological communication forms. Mainly, it was clear that the implementation of dialogue journals in the social studies classroom could occur in an organized, smooth way, engaging students in dialogue with one another and the teacher about the content-specific texts being used.

Dialogue Journals – Word Count

In quantitatively analyzing student journal entries and responses, the number of words per entry and number of words per response was calculated for each student. Word count was one method of data analysis used by Hancock (1993) to determine differences in frequencies over time and changes based on text choice in her study of dialogue journal use in a sixth grade language arts classroom.

Using a spreadsheet, the average word count for journal entries and for journal responses was determined for each of the two units covered within this study. Students completed an average of two journal entries and responses each day. During the first unit, the average student journal entry was 18 words in length with an average student response of 12 words. During the second unit of the study, the average student journal entry was 25 words in length and the average student response was 17 words. This shows a mean seven-word increase in student

journal entries and a five-word increase in student responses from the first unit to the second

unit. A higher number of words is expected in entries as compared to responses because of the

length of time given for entries (five minutes) being longer than the time allotted for responses

(two to three minutes).

To complete the second unit, students watched a video related to the social studies

content. Because the use of journals was structured differently during the video than in unit

lessons, these entries and responses were not included in the second unit data but instead

calculated separately. During the video, student journal entries averaged 35 words in length and

responses averaged 17 words in length. There was an average of five entries and responses

during the video, which was shown over two class periods. The average length of journal entries

during the video was 17 words longer than entries from the first unit and 10 words longer than

entries for the second unit; however, the average length of responses remained the same (17

words per response) as that of the second unit.

Average lengths were also calculated for journal entries and responses between students

and the teacher. The average teacher entry was 56 words in length with an average student

response of 24 words. Mrs. Frost responded to all students each weekend and gave students time

to read and respond to her entry each Monday. Although her entries often covered multiple

topics from the week or asks a series of questions, it was one entry and students responded to it

once instead of multiple times throughout class. Because of this difference in responding, the

averages for student-to-teacher journals were compared to daily journal averages instead of

averages per entry/response. The average daily entries for students in the first unit of the study

were 36 words and responses averaged 23 words. For the second unit, the average daily entries

were 49 words and the average daily responses were 34 words. Average daily entries for the

video lessons were 174 words in length with average daily responses of 85 words. Using the daily averages instead of the per entry/response averages, students responded to Mrs. Frost with approximately the same length of response when looking at data from the first unit. Data from the second unit showed an increase in the length of responses in student-to-student journals that resulted in responses of students being ten words longer when responding to a classmate than when responding to the teacher. When compared with daily averages from video based journal entries, students responses to their partner were 61 words longer than responses of student-to-teacher journal responses. These data showed that students wrote the same or often more when responding to their journal partner than when responding to their teacher.

There was an increase in the number of words in both student journal entries and responses from the first to the second unit in the study. This increase could be the result of students becoming more comfortable with using dialogue journals, increased interest in the unit, or readdressing expectations in the modeling at the beginning of the second unit. Regardless, students gradually grew in the average amount they were writing both in entries and responses as the study continued.

With writing across the curriculum gaining popularity, dialogue journals are one way of integrating writing into content area lessons that could help increase students' writing practice. The increase of length from the first to the second unit in both entries and responses displays an impact on students' writing. Daily writing practice completed by implementing dialogue journals provided an outlet for students to express themselves using written dialogue, which also exercised their writing skills such as sentence structure and grammar. The dialogue journals allowed for a more low-stakes format of practice in these areas since these aspects of writing were not graded or marked in journals. Because these writing components were not scored,

students were in a more relaxed writing environment in an effort to allow students to focus on the content of their writing. The content of entries and responses is further discussed in the qualitative analysis and discussion.

In conclusion, the word count of student entries and responses increased over the course of the study. If the use of dialogue journals were to continue throughout the school year, this increase could continue and could allow students to improve their writing skills, efficiency, and confidence.

Dialogue Journals – Entries and Responses

Responses were grouped into three themes: Conversational statements, Reply statements, and Understanding statements. These themes were present across all 14 participants. Each theme was segmented into categories some of which became more prevalent during the second unit as compared to the first. A diagram of the themes and categories is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Organization chart of themes and categories. This figure illustrates the themes and categories of statements from student journal entries and responses.
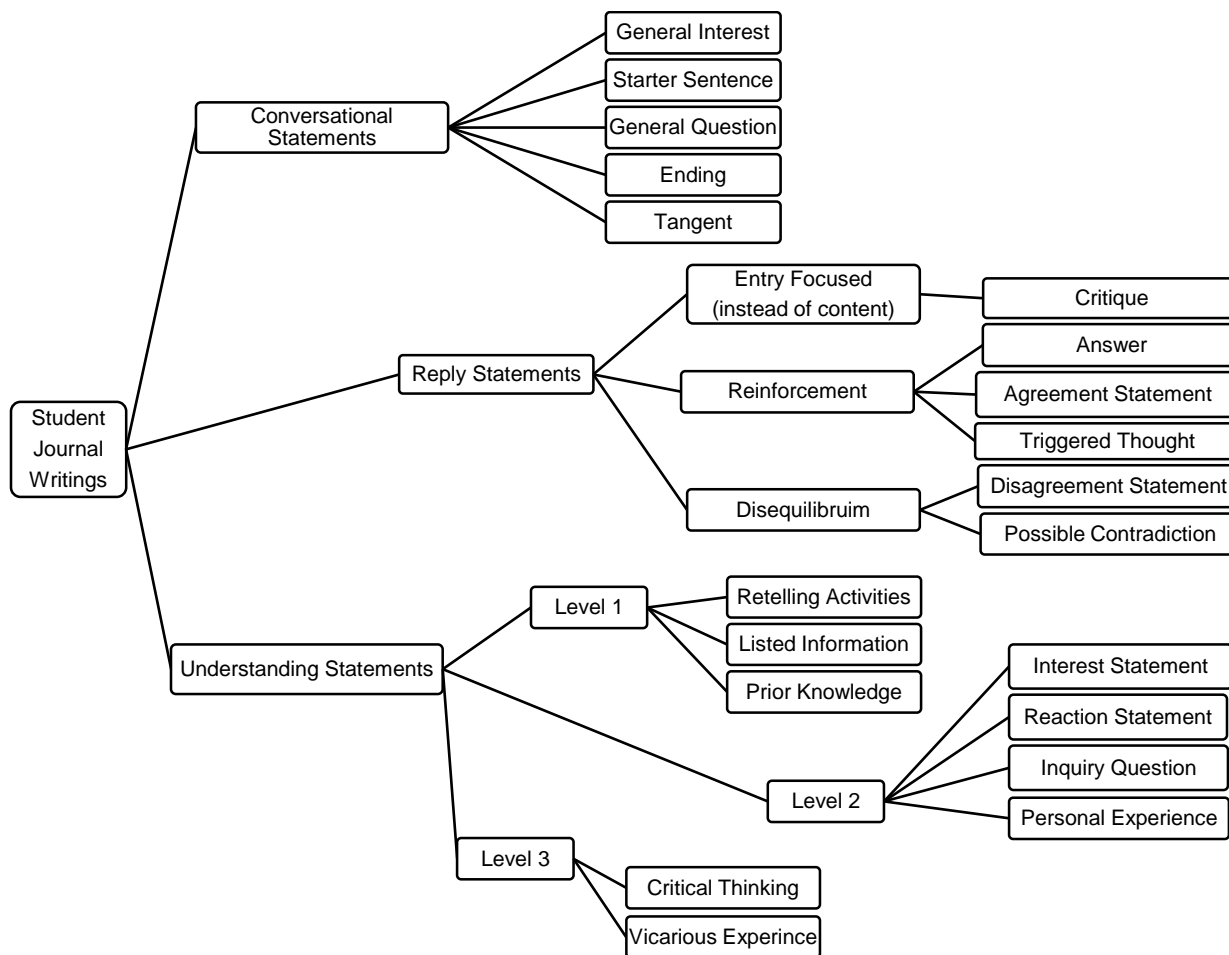
Conversational statement categories. Conversational statements included the following categories: General interest, Starter Sentence, Ending, General Question, and Tangent. These statements did not portray student understanding of content material but instead created a conversation-like flow to journal entries and responses.

General interest. Many of the students throughout both units used general interest statements often. These statements included wording such as "cool", "interesting", and "fun" while addressing a larger topic such as Native Americans or the unit in general.

This was so much fun. I learned a lot.

I love what we are learning!

Yesterday I loved social studies more than I usually do.

I like learning about the Indians.

Starter sentence. These statements appeared at the beginning of both entries and responses. Some students felt the need to have an introductory type of sentence before delving into the content of the lesson. There were instances in which a general interest statement served as the starter sentence. In this case, a student may begin with "I loved what we learned." This statement started a journal entry that went on to include details about food and tribes addressed in the day's lesson. Therefore, this statement was coded as both an interest statement, because the student had expressed general interest in the topic, as well as being coded as a starter sentence since the student used the general interest statement to begin the entry before including additional content-focused sentences with more details. Other statements such as those shown below were coded only as starter sentences. The first example is from a journal entry and the second statement is from a response.

Today I learned a lot.

Thanks for giving me the information.

These statements illustrated students' use of general interest statements as a type of introductory sentence. When writing, students are often required to include an introduction, which could be the reason that this type of statement was used by many students throughout both units.

Ending. Just as students felt the need to include a starter sentence to open an entry or response, some students also included an *ending*. These statements were often much shorter, sometimes as simple as "Bye" or "That's all." Just as with the starter sentences, endings were sometimes double coded to show general interest. For example, one student wrote an entry about Africans and slavery and ended with the sentence, "I like what we are learning." This sentence showed general interest in the content as well as creating a more general statement to close the entry before trading journals. Again, students may have included these types of statements as introductory and closing statements as is expected during writing instruction.

All students throughout both units used starter sentences often whereas endings were only used consistently by one student and sparingly by others throughout both units.

General question. Another category within this group was general questions. These questions were similar to the general interest statements but written as questions to their dialogue journal partners. Examples of general questions included:

What did you like about today?

What is your favorite tribe?

What else do you know about them [the tribes]?

These questions had a general focus, were broad in nature, or offered a question to engage the other student in conversation. These questions were not the result of critical thinking by the student that would result in a growing curiosity to learn more about specific content. Sometimes the general questions were double coded as ending statements. For instance, the last example came at the end of an entry that included listing information the student had learned about various tribes that day. Other more simple examples of students using general questions as ending statements included "Did you know that?" and "What do you think?" By ending with a

question, it was clear that students understood the back and forth dialogues set up through the journals and they were making an attempt to engage their partner in further conversation.

Tangent. The last category within the conversational statement theme was tangent statements. These statements were unrelated to content or lesson activities. Tangent statements appeared least often of any category from any of the three themes. Tangent statements were always directed at the dialogue journal partner. Examples of tangent statements included:

Play with me outside.

You are out of paper.

Again, these were the only statements completely unrelated to the content or lesson activities; less than ten *tangent* statements were coded throughout both units among all 14 participants. These statements were also noted in analytical files because they created confusion at first as to what code needed to be created to represent these few outlier statements. Based on the low occurrence of these statements, there was evidence that the students were able to stay focused during journaling times. This could be the result of appropriate time allotted for journaling and responding (also noted in methodological files), as well as engaging lesson activities and materials to elicit dialogue about content among students.

Reply statement categories. Reply Statements included statements students wrote in response to their partner's initial entry. Within this theme, there were three distinct categories: Disequilibrium, Acknowledgement, and Critique Statements.

Critique statements. These statements focused on the journal entry itself instead of content. For example, students might comment on the length of the journal entry or provide positive or negative feedback about a journal entry. Examples of critique statements included:

Next time write more.

Can you try to give me more details please?

You did a pretty good job!

Although there were few of these evident among all 14 participants, the use of this type of

response showed evidence of students evaluating the written responses of their peers. Not only

were students having a dialogue about the content, but they were also evaluating each other's

work and using critique statements to provide feedback for improvement and clarity in future

journal entries.

    Disequilibrium statements. These statements appeared in student responses in the form

of either disagreement statements or possible contradictions. Examples of disagreement

statements included:

I would not like to take that much. Why would you want all those people?

COOL? COOL? How is it COOL?!!!

In each of these examples, responding student's elaborated on their opinions of the topic

addressed in the initial journal entry. It was clear in reading these types of responses that

utilizing dialogue journals allowed students to converse about content and have engaging

conversations, some of which included varying opinions about the same concept. These

disagreement statements always appeared at the beginning of a reply. This is most likely

because students felt strongly if they did not agree with their partner's entry. The students would

then immediately open their response with a counter statement expressing their disagreement.

The benefit of dialogue journals in this case is that students would continue reading, write their

disagreement statement, and then sometimes expand upon why their opinion differed from their

partner. By doing this within the written format of dialogue journals, students were required to

read the entire entry of their partner without the option of interrupting as is tempting to do when a disagreement arises during verbal dialogue.

Similar to disagreement statements were possible contradictions. These statements went a step beyond disagreement statements by offering a different opinion to that expressed in the initial journal entry. Examples of possible contradictions included:

Actually both places have a lot of trees.

You know being a laborer does not mean you are rich. Right?

How do you know they won a war?

These statements showed the ability of students to evaluate the content presented in their partner's journal entry. The responses offered a possible contradiction to the ideas written in the initial journal entry, showing evidence of students' developing understandings and questioning of other's understandings that were different from their own. Possible Contradictions highlighted differences in interpreting the same materials or lesson. Analytical notes made while coding on week three made clear the need to differentiate between disagreement statements and possible contradiction statements all of which were coded as disequilibrium statements the first two weeks. This resulted in my rereading of all journal entries and responses coded as disequilibrium to determine whether the statement simply stated a disagreement or if it offered a possible contradiction.

In analyzing journal entries and responses, disagreement statements and possible contradictions appeared throughout both units; however, one date stood out for both of these statements. With many varying dates for these statements, there was one common date in which two-thirds of participants had either a disagreement statement or possible contradiction in the responses. The lesson from this date encouraged students to place themselves in the time being

studied and make decisions similar to those of the settlers. Based on the increase in disagreement statements and possible contradictions present in dialogue journals for this lesson's date, it is clear that this type of lesson activity ignites differing opinions and interpretations of historical facts and situations.

Acknowledgement statements. These statements appeared in student responses in three forms: answers, agreement statements, and triggered thoughts.

Answers. These were responses to a question asked in the initial journal entry. As earlier discussed as a conversational talk statement, students sometimes ended an entry by asking a general question. Other questions were more content focused and coded as inquiry statements, which will be discussed later. An example of a general question and answer is as follows.

Example 1

Entry: Which tribe do you like best out of the tribes?

Response: My favorite tribe is the Nansemond.

Example 2

Entry: What did you think about today's study?

Response: I thought it was cool! I liked how we quizzed each other!

Answers to more content-based questions included the following examples.

Example 1

Entry: Where is the Rappahannock tribe located?

Response: The Rappahannock tribe is located in the Tidewater region.

Examples 2

Entry: I wonder what the rocks on the bottom of the net were for. I think that they were used to weigh down the net so it did not float up to the surface and let all the fish get away. How do you think they used it?

Response: Just how you said. I think that when they had the fish in the net, they had to do something or the fish would escape.

These examples showed the variation in levels of understanding represented in questions asked by students. Answers were always coded as reply statements; however, the questions themselves were coded as general questions as explained earlier. In reading all of the participants' entries and responses, I noticed that students did not always answer questions posed in the journal entries.

Agreement statements. These were another form of acknowledgement statement. These statements generally appeared at the start of a response and simply showed agreement to the facts and/or opinions shared in the initial entry. Agreement statements used wordings such as "I also think…," "I like your thinking…" and "I thought the same thing." These statements affirmed the shared understandings and opinions between dialogue journal partners.

Triggered thoughts. These were statements appearing in the responses that acknowledged how something shared in an initial journal entry had triggered a thought or experience for the journal partner. These statements highlighted the importance of content-focused dialogue. Often the triggered thought statement made clear a student's growing understanding or remembering of an event related to content that the student perhaps would not have otherwise considered in generating knowledge. Examples of triggered thought statements included:

Example 1

Entry: ...We went on a field trip to Wolf Creek to see what the tribes looked like.

Response: I do to remember when we went to the Wolf Creek trip in second grade.

Example 2

Entry: ... They hunt deer. Some people hunt, not all, but some do.

Response: ... I forgot about the hunting part. You're right. People do hunt then and now.

Example 3

Entry: ... pilgrims were part of the Virginia Company. ...

Response: ... I was wrong. I did not know they were part of the Virginia Company.

All triggered thought statements illustrated the importance of engaging students in dialogue related to content knowledge. I felt the third example especially highlighted how crucial dialogue was as students built understandings about the content being presented. The response in example three indicated that pilgrims belonged to a different group, and this student reconsidered his existing knowledge after reading his partner's journal entry. If not for the dialogue between these students, one could have continued with a misunderstanding of a critical historical fact. Although triggered thought statements were not present in journals as often as other statements, the rethinking or connections made visible through these statements showed the importance of encouraging dialogue among students during content lessons.

Understanding statement categories. Understanding Statements was the third theme that appeared in journal entries. These statements varied in depth of understanding and were thus subdivided into Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Statements. I created the levels by grouping the thinking skills of revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2001) into three subgroups. Analytical files showed evidence of varying levels of understanding within the

first week of coding which led to the differentiation of levels of understanding statements using

Bloom. Level 1 statements represented those comments in journals which showed a basic level

of understanding. These statements included recalling information but lacked interpretation or

application of material. Within Level 1 statements, students would list facts when sharing prior

knowledge, name information learned during a lesson, or retell activities completed during a

lesson. Level 2 statements showed evidence of students beginning to use higher level thinking

skills as they built their understandings of social studies content. These statements included

interest statements, reaction statements, and inquiry questions, all showing the start of higher

level thinking based on content material. Level 3 statements included thoughts shared that

displayed evidence of critical thinking or students' thoughts of exchanging places (vicarious

experiences) with those who lived in the time period being studied. As is explained here, the

depth of understanding was reflected in levels assigned based on Bloom.

  Level 1 understanding statements. These statements show evidence of basic knowledge.

These statements include the following categories: Retelling Activities, Listing Information, and

Prior Knowledge.

  Retelling Activities. When coded as retelling activities, students had explained events

from the day's lesson. Students generally commented on a part of the lesson they enjoyed or

simply stated an activity they completed. So, the journal entries were sometimes treated like a

diary in that they were recording the day's events. Recapping lesson activities seems

unnecessary since students' journal partners did the same thing in class; however, these

statement would often highlight a favorite part of the lesson or reaction to a specific center

rotation or game followed by a general question about the partner's experience. These

statements occurred throughout both units. Examples of retelling activities statements included:

Today was fun with the paragraph stuff and the cutting and gluing.

Yesterday was fun because we made a flipbook for the seasons.

I thought that the crunchy one was harder to do.

All of these statements were about recollections of activities completed in class. The last example was from an initial journal entry during a lesson in which Mrs. Frost had students "dig" chocolate chips out of regular and then chewy chocolate chip cookies. The goal of the lesson was to allow students the experience of being archeologists. Based on the recall activity statement, the student was drawing conclusions about the lesson activity; however, that statement along with the remainder of the initial journal entry did not show evidence of the student making connections between the class activity and the actions of archeologists. Because there was no evidence that the student applied knowledge gained from the cookie experience to information about archeologists from content-specific text, I categorized this statement and other recall activity statements as Level 1 Understanding Statements.

Listed information statements. These statements were fact based. The information in these statements showed evidence of students' ability to recall learned information. No interpretation, reaction, analysis, or synthesis of information was present in these statements. The information included was similar to information usually quizzed on in multiple-choice format at the end of a unit or asked about in reading comprehension questions after reading a section of a text. Because these previously mentioned assessment methods are often used in content-area lessons, students might have felt the need to recall and list general information learned. Listed information statements were the most commonly used statements among participants for both units. I found no pattern of increase or decrease in the number of statements coded as listed information from the first to the second unit. More listed information statements

appeared in initial entries than in responses; however, some responses were double coded as a reply statement and a listed information statement. Examples of listed information statement included:

> They [Native Americans] did a lot of picnicking instead of eating out in fancy restaurants.

> I know that the Powhatan spoke Algonquian.

> Wow! In 1619 they had a General Assembly and today in 2015 they still have it!

> Women came to Jamestown in 1620.

The above examples of listed information statements were in initial entries. Most listed information statements were in students' initial entries and some of these entries included multiple statements coded as listed information. Occasionally, students would have a listed information statement as part of their response. This often occurred if the initial entry included an inquiry question. In this case, I double coded the statement as both an answer and listed information. At other times, students began with an agreement statement and then included listed information [in responses to add to what was shared in the initial entry]. The following is an example of a response in which the statement was double coded as answer and listed information.

> Entry: I thought the Indians would attack early. You?

> Response: The Indians did attack but attack late when England had a lot of people.

> *Prior knowledge.* Students sometimes included statements to share prior knowledge with their partner. These statements would start "I knew" or "I already knew" to show the information was known prior to the lesson. It was also clear in the first entry of each unit that students were journaling about what they already knew about the upcoming unit topic. In these

entries at the beginning of each unit, students also responded to their partner by sharing information they already knew. In this case, statements were double coded as reply statements and prior knowledge statements. Examples of prior knowledge statements included:

> What I know about Native Americans is that they hunted for food instead of going to the store.

> I know they start their own fires and they made their utensils. I also know they made stuff out of animal fur.

Most prior knowledge statements appeared only on the first day of each of the two units covered in the study (also noted in analytical files).

Level 2 understanding statements. These statements showed higher level thinking than the level 1 understanding statements; however, the statements still lack evidence of critical thinking and higher level skills at the top of revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2001). Students showed evidence of understanding, judgement, application, and some analysis. These statements fall into four categories: Interest Statements, Reaction Statements, Inquiry Questions, and Personal Experience Statements. Reaction Statements were the most commonly used Level 2 Understanding Statement. Both Level 1 and Level 2 Understanding Statements appeared more often than Level 3 Understanding statements in both units.

Interest statements. Unlike general interest statements, interest statements were specific to the content covered in the day's lesson. These statements did not express a reaction to, but instead only an interest in a specific person or action from the social studies texts. Students' statements in this category often used phrases such as "I liked" or "…was really interesting." I considered this category Level 2 Understanding because students were not just remembering facts but also pointing out one specific learned item that was appealing to them. Interest

statements appeared across both units. Examples of interest statements are below and provide a sample of statements with interest going beyond that covered in the general interest category.

I think it's cool what's happening in England at that time.

I like the voting.

Can you believe that the archeologists can do that!!!! That would be really cool to watch. Each of these statements showed evidence of student interest in a specific fact or event related to the content. Other interest statements also expressed interest in a certain person or place learned about. These statements often began with "I like" and were similar in nature to general questions but with a more content-driven focus.

Reaction statements. These statements showed evidence of students' reactions to learned materials. Words such as "gross" and "disgusting" displayed students' reactions to conditions of the ships the settlers were on as they came to the new world. These types of reactions displayed evidence of thinking and understanding past a basic level and were therefore coded as Level 2 Understanding Statements. Students used reaction statements to record judgements about information they had learned. Referring back to revised Bloom's Taxonomy, reaction statements showed evidence of students' understanding, applying, and analyzing information. These statements appeared across both units for all participants. Reaction statements had the biggest change from the first to the second unit. All students greatly increased the number of reaction statements in both entries and responses in the second unit. In general, reaction statements occurred eight times more often in the second unit than in the first. The following statements are examples of reaction statements.

Yuck! That was gross! I do not want to be on a boat like that.

I cannot believe how the English treated the Africans. I really hope they were indentured servants, and not slaves.

I think that it would be cool to be the only tribe in the piedmont that is recognized because it would make me feel special.

Reaction statements went further than interest statements. These statements were not simply stating that the student liked a particular learned fact but instead offered an emotional reaction to the learned information. Many students expressed a similar negative and disgusted reaction to the first example after learning about the living conditions on the settlers' ships. Reaction statements showed the greatest increase from the first to the second unit than any other category. This increase could be the result of students becoming more comfortable with dialogue journals and beginning to use written expression to express affective responses to content-focused text.

Inquiry questions. These questions differed from general questions that were often used as ending statements and quite general in nature. Inquiry questions, in comparison, were content specific. These questions showed evidence of students' understanding of materials and curiosity for more information. Referring back to revised Bloom's taxonomy, these questions utilized understanding, applying, and analyzing content facts. Inquiry questions appeared mostly in journal entries, not responses. There were days when multiple students generated inquiry questions as compared to other dates. Many inquiry questions focused on specific tribes and daily life during the time of the early settlers. These questions were present in both units without an increased or decreased pattern. Examples of inquiry questions included:

I also wonder why there was so little jobs?

I wonder if they could drink the James River water.

It's weird. How did she [Pocahontas] learn English?

I wonder why no women were allowed to go?

Just as with the difference in general versus interest statements, inquiry versus general questions were more content-focused. Inquiry statements were specific in nature and appeared mostly at the end of an initial entry. These questions showed evidence of students analyzing and evaluating the information presented. Students were not only sharing information with their dialogue journal partner but were also asking one another questions to further their understanding. These questions showed evidence of students not simply reading content-specific texts to answer general recall questions but instead creating questions of their own.

Personal experience. This was the last category under Level 2 Understanding statements. These comments appeared in both student journal entries and responses over both units, although there were not many of these statements. Based on the low number of statements coded as personal experience, students had difficulty relating content-based material to their own lives. These statements required students to understand, analyze, and apply information from a text to their individual lives categorizing them as level 2 understanding statements. Examples of these statements included:

I think I once found a artifact near my old house.

My mom worked for an archeologist in Maryland.

These types of statements were not evident in all students' writings but did appear across both units. Although these statements did not occur often, when students were able to relate what they were learning to personal experience, these connections were shared in writing and contributed to the content-driven conversation in dialogue journals. An example of this follows.

Entry: I have a friend in Pennsylvania that found a arrowhead.

Response: They used a lot of arrowheads. They used it as a good defense.

Level 3 understanding statements. These statements illustrated evidence of higher level thinking skills. Statements coded within this theme were in two categories: critical thinking and vicarious experience. Both critical thinking and vicarious experience statements were indications that students understood the content and were able to analyze, interpret, and evaluate the information presented. There was a large increase in Level 3 Understanding Statements from the first to the second unit (also noted in analytical files); however, there were less Level 3 Statements than either Level 1 or Level 2 Statements. This increase in Level 3 Understanding statements in the second unit might be a result of students becoming more familiar with the exercise of dialogue journals and being encouraged to respond to content-based text in ways other than answering test-like questions.

Critical thinking. Higher level thinking skills evident in critical thinking statements included judgement, problem solving, and logical reasoning on top of those mentioned for all level 2 understanding statements. These statements included student reflections about the content learned instead of simply stating facts. Students went beyond listing information to offer opinions and sometimes other ideas for how to better the situations learned about in our country's history. Students questioned the reasoning of both Native Americans and settlers. Critical thinking statements appeared across both units but the number of critical thinking statements was higher in the second unit. There were also more students in the second unit displaying evidence of critical thinking than in the first. Examples of critical thinking statements included:

There will be more population since women came. When the kids grow up, they can work. Then they can have kids. Then they can work when they grow up and it happens over and over.

I think they overall made a good choice but maybe they should not have so many gentlemen because I do not see their use. They should have some hard working women on board.

Vicarious experience. Some statements in both entries and responses showed evidence of students changing places with people in history. These statements required students to use higher level thinking skills such as understanding, analysis, interpretation, application, judgement, evaluation, problem solving, and logical reasoning. Students sometimes offered an alternative approach to solving a problem, expressed how they would feel if in the situation being studied, or listed actions they would take if living in a past time. Many students showed evidence of exchanging places (vicarious experiences) while studying about the voyage to the new world. Students made comments about how difficult it would be to live on the ships and commented about what they would do in that situation. Students also listed people they would take along with reasoning for their choices if they were sailing to the new world. An increased number of vicarious experience statements resulted from lessons about the voyage and a lesson about which people were able to come to America (also noted in analytical files). One of these dates is the same date that had the most disagreement and possible contradiction statements. Based on the increase in all of these statements on the same date, it appears that students allowing themselves to mentally exchange places could allow for an increase in disequilibrium leading to higher level thinking. Some examples of vicarious experience statements included:

I would also take pictures and paper to write notes on so I could send them to my family in England.

Well the bride ship was probably fun but I wouldn't give up my home in England to go and marry a guy I've never met in my life, let along kiss one!

I would hate to be a farmer or a laborer.

As students wrote vicarious experience statements, they expressed opinions as if they were settlers. These statements showed evidence of some students being able to mentally exchange places with the people they were learning about in history. These statements were not evident in all students' writings but did appear across both units of the study. Many students were able to think about themselves as settlers as evidenced in the initial entries from the lesson in which students were encouraged to plan who they would take with them if they were leaving England for the new world.

Dialogue Journals – Video Entries and Responses

At the end of the second unit, students viewed the Disney movie, Pocahontas. During the viewing, Mrs. Frost asked students to respond to the video using their dialogue journal. Students were told to write in their journal at any time during the movie. Mrs. Frost paused the movie approximately three times each day to allow students to switch journals with their partners and respond.

Journal entries and responses for the two video days were coded separately from the other journal entries and responses. These student writings were quite different from the daily journal entries from routine social studies lessons. The themes and categories of video journal entries and responses are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Themes and categories from video-based lessons. This figure includes the themes and categories of statements from students' dialogue journals during the video lessons of the study.
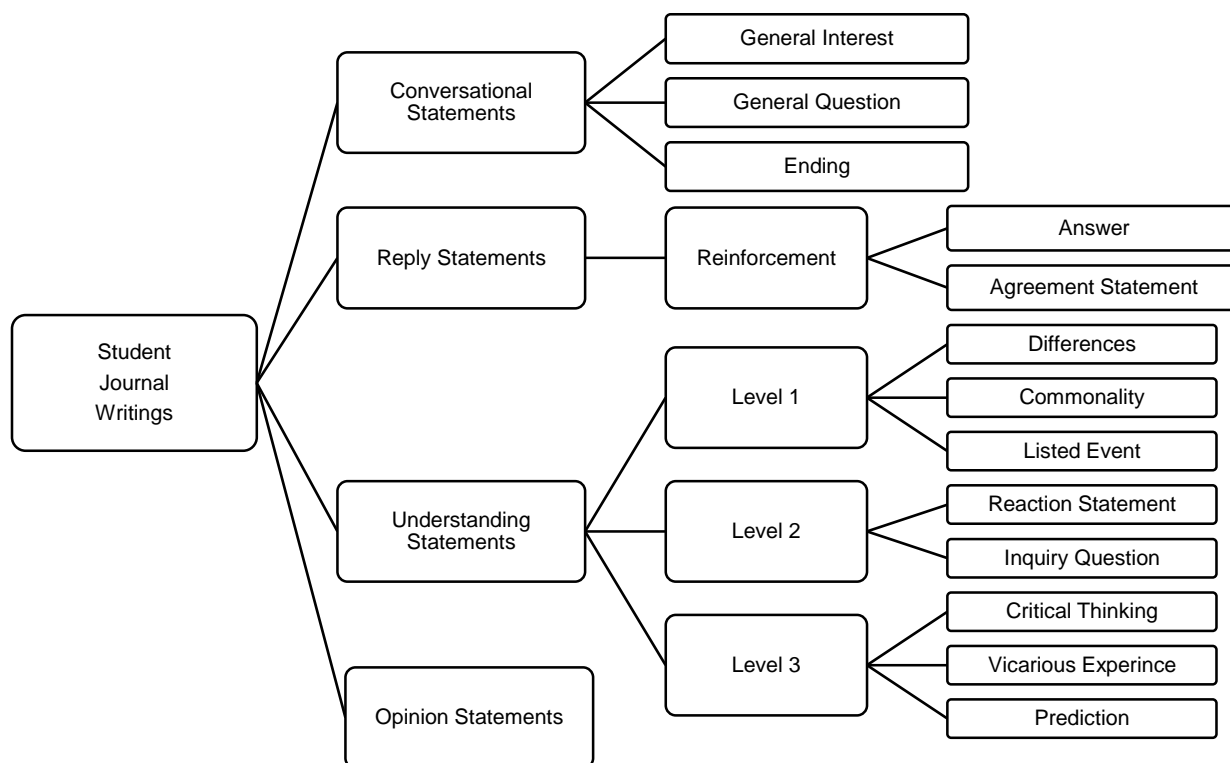
A few of the same codes were present in video journals that appeared in lesson journal writings. Common codes used included: general interest, inquiry question, agreement statement, reaction statement, critical thinking, ending statement, general question, answer, and vicarious experience statements. Statements coded with these codes were similar in nature to those from journal entries and responses completed during lessons throughout both units.

Although these statements were coded similarly to those from lesson journal entries and responses, a few of them show the difference in student thinking between lessons and the video. For example, the following statement showed evidence of critical thinking.

She [Pocahontas] seems to control nature.

This studesnt after writing about movie events such as the dog and raccoon friends of Pocahontas, the wise tree that Pocahontas talked to throughout the movie and the talking wind, came to the conclusion that Pocahontas "controlled" nature. It is unclear as to whether or not this is the message Disney was trying to portray; however, this concept does fit with what students had learned about Native Americans living off of and respecting the land. This metaphorical understanding reached by this student showed evidence of higher level thinking skills.

A statement coded as an agreement statement was also similar to those found in student journal writings from social studies lessons. This statement stood out during analysis because of the way in which the student responded. After reading their partner's initial entry about the difference of the movie including a dog and some funny events including the dog and raccoon, the student responded with the following agreement statement.

Yes, the puppy did not go to Jamestown to do that and the dog didn't run after the raccoon. #LOL

The use of a hashtag and abbreviated language often used in informal dialogue was present in this response. This showed evidence of students being comfortable with using dialogue journals and beginning to use written dialogue in the journals as they would friendly conversation in outlets such as social media or text messaging. A different student also used this format in the following statement coded as an opinion and reaction statement.

I don't' think it was right to call each other dirty working demons. #so sad

A frowning face, again showed evidence of students using informal language structures such as hashtags and emojis in their dialogue journals, also followed this statement. The use of

hashtags, abbreviations, and emojis was also noted in analytical files as a method used by students to show agreement or reinforce a reaction shared by their partner.

New codes were also necessary in analyzing the video journal writings. New codes included: difference, commonality, opinion statement, listed event, and prediction statement.

Differences. Difference statements were the most commonly used type of statement in video writings. These statements expressed a difference between what occurred in the movie as compared to what students had learned during social studies lessons. These statements often appeared in list format with no transition from one to the next and included little added information, expansion, or reaction to the difference. Examples of difference statements included:

John Smith did not come on the first voyage to Jamestown.

John Smith does not fall in love with Pocahontas in real life.

They could not talk the first time Pocahontas and John Smith met.

The number of difference statements in students' journal writings ranged from 3-30. On average, 46% of journal writings were composed of difference statements. Some of these statements were interesting in that they pointed to the assumption students made that what they had learned from social studies lessons and content-based texts was real and what was viewed in the video was false. For example, the following statements were written as differences students found between the video and lesson information.

They did not call each other savages.

They did not hang people.

These statements showed evidence of students considering content-specific texts and lessons taught as not only factual but also as being a fully inclusive view of history. When something in

the movie did not match their existing knowledge, students automatically wrote a statement in their journal expressing the movie's incorrect portrayal of history.

  Commonalities. Students also listed commonalities between the movie and what they had learned from content-specific texts and lessons. The number of commonality statements ranged from 0-6 representing much less of the student writings than difference statements. Examples of commonality statements included:

  They did name it Jamestown..

  The warriors did shave the right side of their heads.

  It is true that they didn't find gold.

These statements pointed out commonalities between the movie and knowledge gained from social studies lessons. Based on the wording of these statements, it again appears that students take lesson information as fact and a comprehensive representation of history. By starting, "it is true that…" the student is affirming the correctness of an event in the video by comparing it to existing knowledge from social studies lessons.

  Opinion statements. These statements appeared in video entries and responses. Some of the statements were opinions of the movie whereas others were about characters in the movie. Example of opinion statements included:

  This is a good movie!

  This movie is wrong on so many levels. At least they could make it more real.

  I totally think they should have told the real story.

Many students shared the opinion of the movie being "good." There were also a lot of statements questioning why the events in the movie were changed from what actually occurred in history. One student expressed their dislike of the movie events being different than learned

historical information while also critiquing Disney movies in general. The statement is as follows:

> I think this is a good movie but it is also VERY disgusting. A lot of things were wrong and some of them were right but most of them were wrong. What I do not understand is why did they make the whole movie on John Smith and Pocahontas falling in love?! Probably because it is a Disney movie. They have to have a prince and a princess. Right?

This reasoning about why events in the movie were changed showed higher level thinking. I double coded this statement as both opinion and critical thinking. Also evident in this entry was the assumption of the student that Disney changes history for the purpose of pleasing an audience; this student clearly did not appreciate how information was presented in the movie and viewed what was learned in class as factual.

Opinion statements differed from reaction statements in that they were specifically about the movie in general, a character in the movie, or how a certain character or event was portrayed in the movie. These statements were not reactions to what was happening but instead focused on a reaction and strong opinion of the movie or how the movie was produced. This was a different type of response than was evident in dialogue journals during regular social studies lessons.

Listed event. These statements recorded an event that occurred in the movie. There was no reaction or analysis of the event, but simply a listing of events from the movie. Examples of listed events included:

> The raccoon died.

> So John Smith saw the talking tree.

Prediction. These statements showed evidence of students making predictions as they watched the video. Examples of prediction statements included:

They are not going to find gold.

John Smith is not going to die I think.

One prediction statement was not directed as the movie events. Instead, this statement posed a prediction related to how the event most likely happened in real life as opposed to how it was presented in the movie.

I think when it actually happened, Pocahontas saved John Smith but did not say she loved him.

Predictions were also made in responses from partners. For example, the following "no" response was double coded as answer and prediction.

Entry: Will she make it in time?

Response: No.

Many predictions made by students in both entries and responses were based upon what they had learned during social studies lessons.

Most commonly, student writings from the video were focused on differences between the video and what they had learned in class, a finding made clear in both journal entries and analytical files. If the video had been shown at the beginning of the unit, there might have been very different results because students would not have the knowledge from social studies lessons which they were using to point out inconsistencies between the movie and history. Although students were able to respond to the video at any time, most students only listed differences that appeared as they watched the movie, with some added conversation when Mrs. Frost stopped the movie for students to respond to each other. Responses showed some evidence of differing types

of statements. With only one personal experience statement and no triggered thoughts or

possible contradiction statements, it appeared that students were highly focused on comparing

the movie to class ideas, agreeing with one another on the many differences and their shared

opinion that the movie producers should have told the original story.

Dialogue Journals – Teacher/Student Journals

Throughout both units, Mrs. Frost wrote in student journals once per week. This

occurred all but one week during the two units of the study. She read the students' journal

entries and responses for the week and then wrote her own responses to each student. Students

were always given a few minutes to read what she had written after returning their journals.

Some students wrote back to her, whereas others did not. Many of the statements coded for this

portion of the dialogue journals were quite similar to student-to-student journals entries and

responses. Themes and categories for the student-to-teacher journals entries and responses are

shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Themes and categories for student-to-teacher journals. This figure includes the themes and categories of statements from students' dialogue journals from the student-to-teacher journals.

```
Student              Conversational         Starter Sentence
Journal              Statements
Writings                                    Ending

                     Reply Statements       Reinforcement          Answer
                                                                   Agreement Statement

                                            Complement             Specific Compliment
                                                                   General Compliment

                                            Foreshadowing Statement
                                            Reflective Question
                                            Defensive Statement

                     Understanding          Level 1               Listed Information
                     Statements
                                            Level 2               Interest Statement
                                                                  Reaction Statement
                                                                  Inquiry Question
                                                                  Personal Experience

                                            Level 3               Critical Thinking
                                                                  Vicarious Experince
```

The following codes from student-to-student journals were also present in student-to-teacher journals: inquiry questions, listed information, answer, agreement statements, interest statements, starter sentences, reaction statements, ending statements, critical thinking statements, vicarious experience statements, and personal experience statements. Although these codes were used for statements similar to those in student-to-student journals, a few examples stood out as different, possibly because the students were writing to Mrs. Frost rather than another classmate.

The following are examples of inquiry questions posed by Mrs. Frost:

Where do you think the diseases came from that killed the Indians in the past?

Why were the seasons such a big deal for the Native Americans?

Mrs. Frost posed these questions along with many others to students as she journaled back each week. Other inquiry questions focused on encouraging students to further explain a thought or reaction from their journal entries to their partner. An example of this was as follows:

Example 1

Mrs. Frost: What makes you think they won a war?

Student: I think that they won a war because they are dancing which happens after winning a war or a special event.

Example 2

Mrs. Frost: On 10-20-15 you and your buddy wrote about the wealthy merchants being mad. Why do you think they would be mad?

Student: Because they did not want their servants to leave.

In the above examples, it was clear that inquiry questions from Mrs. Frost sometimes encouraged students to explain their thoughts. On other occasions, she included multiple inquiry questions within one entry. When this occurred, students generally only responded to the final question she had asked. In some cases, Mrs. Frost's entire entry was composed of inquiry questions. One entry included four inquiry questions back to back with no other statements. Although many of her entries were heavily coded with inquiry questions, some showed more of a conversational tone. There were also entries from Mrs. Frost that asked students to respond to their partner's opinion. The following journal excerpt is an example.

Mrs. Frost: I like your thoughts about the people who you would pick to go to

Jamestown. Do you agree with your buddy that the gentlemen were important people?

Following this example, the student did not respond to Mrs. Frost's question. The student

answered a question in the response but it was a different question that was posed later in the

entry.

There were also inquiry questions asked by the students to Mrs. Frost in this section of

the dialogue journals. This did not occur often; however, the following is an example.

I wonder if they had wars between the tribes!

Another type of statement used in both student-to-student journals and student-to-teacher

journals was listed information statements. These statements were in both the students' and

teacher's writings. Students often listed information to answer questions asked by Mrs. Frost.

Similarly, Mrs. Frost would often list information related to journal entries and inquiry questions

she had read in the student-to-student journals. For example, this entry appeared following a

student's entry to a partner about whether or not the settlers could use the water in the nearby

river.

Mrs. Frost: I'll give you a hint about the water. The James River's water mixes with the

water in the Chesapeake Bay/Atlantic Ocean. What do we know about the water in those

bodies of water? Do you think the water in Jamestown was good to drink?

One last noticeable characteristic of questions posed by Mrs. Frost in student-to-teacher

journals was the number of questions as compared to the number of statements that made up

each entry. Upon analyzing student-to-teacher journals, I found the focus on questioning rather

than conversational statements was quickly evident. In counting statements written only by Mrs.

Frost in entries to all participants over both units, there were 156 statements and 160 questions.

This is the opposite of student-to-student journals, which included more dialogue with fewer questions. This could be the reason for student responses in this section of dialogue journals being much shorter than responses to their classmates. Responses were sometimes only an answer or answers to the questions asked by Mrs. Frost with no additional dialogue.

The other type of statement coded in both student-to-student and student-to-teacher journals that was somewhat different in teacher journaling was agreement statements. In journals with Mrs. Frost, these statements often came at the beginning of an entry as was the case with student entries to their classmates. An analytical file was made to note Mrs. Frost's positivity in these statements and how she seemed to use these statements to connect with students before advancing to inquiring questions. Some examples are as follows:

The voyage is going to be awful I agree! Do you think anyone really died on the ship?

I agree with you that there may be a ceremony going on. What kind do you think?

I agree that the peninsula is a good choice to settle. What other reasons made it a good choice?

I also liked that you brought canned food to eat. Do you think they had canned food like we have today?

Five codes were created for the analysis of student-to-teacher journals. These codes included: specific compliment, general compliment, reflective question, foreshadowing statements, and defensive statements.

Specific compliment. These compliments often came at the beginning of Mrs. Frost's journal entry. She complimented students on their thinking visible in the journal entries to their partner during the previous week. These statements were coded as specific compliments because

they targeted a specific statement, fact, or comment from a student's writing. Many

compliments were double-coded. Examples of specific compliments are as follows:

I like that you have noticed so much about the engraving.

I like that you are thinking about life as a Native American.

General compliment. These compliments usually appeared at the beginning of Mrs.

Frost's journal entries as well. General compliments unlike specific compliments were broad in

nature. This difference in compliments was clear in Mrs. Frost's journal entries and noted in

analytical files. Examples of general compliments included:

Great observation!

I like that you have learned so much so far!

Reflective questions. Some questions posed by Mrs. Frost asked students to reflect upon

previous journal entries with a classmate or on lesson activities. These questions differed from

inquiry questions in that they did not ask students a question with a definitive answer but instead

encouraged students to provide an opinion or personalized reasoning for an expressed comment

or opinion shared in a previous entry. Examples of reflective questions included:

How did your list of people who should go to Jamestown compare to the actual list going

to Jamestown?

I'm glad you enjoyed the cookie activity. What did you learn about archaeology from

this activity?

Foreshadowing statements. These statements by Mrs. Frost provided foreshadowing

for students that what they were learning and writing about in their journals would be helpful in

understanding future lessons. These statements may have built interest and prepared students for

upcoming topics. There were very few of these statements. An example of a foreshadowing statement included:

Keep that in mind when we start thinking about problems the settlers encounter.

Defensive statements. There was only one defensive statement by Mrs. Frost; however a code was created for this statement because it had a different focus and tone than other statements. The defensive statement and student response were from the following excerpt.

Mrs. Frost: You didn't like the movie? I think it's a great way to show you what is

happening in Native American villages in 1600 and before.

Student: No. I like it but I watched it in second grade. I agree sincerely.

Based on the response, it is clear that the student perceived Mrs. Frost as being defensive about his journal comments in reference to the video shown in class. Responding to her questions and reasoning for showing the video, the student then also became defensive by explaining why he did not enjoy the movie. The final statement by the student almost sounds like an apology to Mrs. Frost for disliking something from a lesson she had planned. Since this dialogue exchange occurred in the second out of three entries between the her and this participant, there is no reason to consider long-term effects of the conversation on the student's dialogue with Mrs. Frost. The defensive nature of this dialogue brought about by Mrs. Frost in reference to the student's journal entries and responses with a dialogue partner could have effected the openness of the participant to express opinions with his partner in later lessons. A methodological file noted the necessity of teacher responses having an accepting tone in order to ensure a safe space for students to express themselves.

A comprehensive listing of codes and definitions can be found in Table 1. Codes included in the table are from all three types of journals (student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and video-based).

Table 1

Descriptions of codes for qualitative analysis of student dialogue journals.

Code	Description
Agreement Statement	Statement expressing a student's agreement with reactions or opinions shared in a partner's entry
Answer	Statements in replies that answer a question posed in a partner's journal entry
Critical Thinking	Statements expressing higher level thinking related to content *(ex. Judgments of character, questioning of decisions)*
Critique	Statements critiquing a partner's entry *(ex. "Next time write more.")*
Disagreement Statement	Statements expressing a disagreement with what their partner shared in the initial entry
Ending	Conclusion statements at the end of entries and responses
General Interest	Statements showing general interest of the content area of a broad topic
General Question	Questions that were broad in nature, sometimes used to engage journaling partner in conversation
Inquiry Questions	Specific questions about content
Interest Statement	Statements showing interest in a particular fact learned
Listed Information	Statements listing facts related to content
Personal Experience	Statements expressing a personal connection to the content
Possible Contradiction	Statements explaining a possible contradiction to a reaction or opinion shared in their partner's initial entry
Prior Knowledge	Statements expressing students understandings related to content prior to the current lesson
Reaction Statement	Statements expressing a reaction to learned facts or cultural aspects of historical events presented
Retelling Activity	Statements that retell part of an event from class
Starter Sentence	Introductory sentences at the beginning of entries and responses
Tangent	Statements unrelated to content
Triggered Thought	Statements acknowledging a thought triggered by a comment made in their partner's entry
Vicarious Experience	Statements expressing their emotions or opinions related to themselves living through the situations being presented

Additional Findings from Journal Entries and Responses

Although not an anticipated finding, I could not help but notice students' grammar and spelling errors as I coded entries and responses. Many spelling errors occurred when students were spelling difficult words such as rarely used words or proper nouns naming the various

Native American tribes. Additionally, students were also often using "to" and "too" incorrectly. Another homophone often used incorrectly was "their" and "there." With this second example, students generally used "there" every time regardless of the correct homophone that should have been used. Spelling errors and incorrectly used homophones were two noted conventional skills, which appeared often in journals of most participants.

Journaling Conclusions

The analysis of both student-to-student and student-to-teacher journal entries and responses was the main data source for this study. In reflecting on the codes and themes that emerged from the data, students were able to use the dialogue journals to record what they were learning and express reactions and conclusions drawn from lesson materials and conversations with dialogue journal partners. Statements such as reaction statements, vicarious experience statements, and personal experiences evident in student-to-student and student-to-teacher journals may not have been shared if not for the unrestricted opportunities from dialogue journals.

Quantitative Data – MUSIC Model

Data from the MUSIC Model Inventory (Jones, 2009) gave insight into students' perceptions of the various components of motivation represented in the survey instrument. Data from the inventory are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

MUSIC Inventory results including answer range and mean for each item.

Inventory Question	Answer Range	Construct Measured	Answer Mean
#1	2-4	Success	3.31
#2	3-4	Interest	3.46
#3	2-4	Usefulness	3.23
#4	2-4	Success	2.92
#5	1-4	Empowerment	2.77
#6	2-4	Caring	3.69
#7	2-4	Usefulness	3.38
#8	2-4	Interest	3.46
#9	3-4	Caring	3.77
#10	1-4	Success	2.77
#11	2-4	Empowerment	3.46
#12	2-4	Interest	3.46
#13	1-4	Usefulness	3.38
#14	1-4	Caring	3.19
#15	3-4	Empowerment	3.46

Note. The inventory scale ranged from 1-4. (1 = No; 2 = Maybe; 3 = Yes; 4 = Yes, Definitely!)

As can be seen in the above table, most inventory statement answers ranged from 2-4. With the

elementary version of the MUSIC Inventory, the scale is not equally split between positive and

negative. With "2" representing "maybe" and "1" being the only negative answer, it appears that

most students did not answer negatively for any statement on the inventory. Only five "1's"

appeared as answers among all students. When collecting the inventories from Mrs. Frost at the

end of the second unit, she mentioned that she planned to address the results regarding the caring

statements with her class. Although the mean answer for each of the three caring statements was

above three meaning that overall, students felt positive in their perspective of teacher caring in relation to the use of dialogue journals, Mrs. Frost was still upset that a student had answered "1" for one of these statements.

Three statements on the inventory had an answer mean lower than three. Two out of three of these statements asked about student perceptions of success related to the activity. This was interesting considering students did not receive a grade for dialogue journals and Mrs. Frost did not make marks for corrections in journals. Students could have answered lower for the success statements because they knew the dialogue journals were not being graded meaning there was no way of being successful or unsuccessful since the completion of journals did not affect their social studies grade. Students' perception of success could have also been low as a result of encouraging students to record affective responses to content-based texts, requiring them to adopt a more aesthetic reading stance. This aesthetic reading stance is quite different than the general efferent reading stance taken in public education when reading content-based text often assessed by rote questioning. Encouraging a change in reading stance could have caused disequilibrium for students as they read and transact with texts leading to a lowered perception of success. It would be interesting to see if the perception of success changed over time as students become more comfortable with using dialogue journals to record and share their transactions with texts including affective responses.

Another interesting finding from the MUSIC Inventory was the difference in answer ranges and means for the three caring statements. As mentioned earlier, the teacher was upset that one student had given one of the caring statements a "1." The statement, "My teacher likes me" had an answer mean of 3.19. Although positive on the answer scale, the other two success statements had much higher means with one of the statements having an answer range of 3-4.

Based on these answers, it appeared that students felt more strongly about Mrs. Frost helping

them and caring about their success with engaging in dialogue journal writings than their

perception about her caring about them in general as a person. Therefore, some students felt that

although Mrs. Frost may not care about the student, she did care about their success in the

assignment. Overall means for each of the motivational constructs are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Means for each of the five constructs measured in the MUSIC Inventory.

Motivational Construct	Mean
Empowerment	3.23
Usefulness	3.33
Success	3
Interest	3.46
Caring	3.55

Note. The inventory scale ranged from 1-4.
(1 = No; 2 = Maybe; 3 = Yes; 4 = Yes, Definitely!)

Because means for each of the constructs were between three and four, I concluded that students

perceived using dialogue journals as a positive experience. Again, for reasons listed earlier, it

was unclear as to why success received the lowest average. Perception of caring received the

highest average. This could be a result of Mrs. Frost writing to students each week as part of the

dialogue journal activity. Students were able to write back to her and engage in an individual

conversation about content through this written format which could have allowed for the high

mean given by students to statements referring to perceptions of caring.

In analyzing inventory results, special attention was given to those statements in which a

student answered "1." Only four statements on the inventory received a "1" with these answers

coming from three students. The first student gave a "1" to one empowerment statement and one

success statement. The second student gave a "1" to the same empowerment statement as the first student. The third student gave a "1" to one usefulness statement and one caring statement. Because of the variety of statements given a one by students, it was difficult to draw conclusions based on these five answers.

On the other hand, there were two statements with answer means of 3.69 and 3.77. Both of these statements addressed student perceptions of caring. With each of the statements beginning with "My teacher…" it was clear that the students had a general positive perception of Mrs. Frost in reference to completing dialogue journals. This positive perception could be a result of Mrs. Frost reading journals and responding to students on a weekly basis. The third caring statement was worded in a way more focused on Mrs. Frost caring about the student in general instead of the teacher's role or caring about a specific activity. This could have accounted for the larger range of answers and lower mean for this statement as compared to the other caring statements.

These positive perceptions were supported by student remarks noted in the observational files shared earlier. The comment, "Can we start doing these [dialogue journals] in science too?" showed that one student enjoyed the journals enough to ask to start the activity in another subject area. This quote showed evidence of one student's interest in the activity. Comments shared earlier also displayed evidence of students making connections between writing in dialogue journals and using current technology such as text messaging. Being able to relate classroom activities to everyday technological ways of communication could also have increased students' interest.

Overall, the inventory results showed evidence of positive student perceptions of all five motivational components in the inventory. Although some students ranked some inventory items

low, the mean for each component was two or higher for all participants. Caring stood out as having the highest positive perception by students. This was evident by the overall mean from all students in regards to caring items being the highest as well as caring being the only component with a mean of three or higher for all participants. Interest was the second highest ranked component according to inventory results and was supported by student comments from observational files.

Summary of Findings

Major findings to better understand students' meaning-making processes based on responses in dialogue journals to content-specific texts were most easily visible in the figures presented in the three sections of dialogue journals (student-to-student, video, and student-to-teacher). Figures of the themes and statement codes created through the analysis of dialogue journals provide an organized hierarchical structure for the various student responses. The themes and codes provide insight into the meaning-making processes students undergo while responding to content-specific texts. The themes of conversational talk and reply statements included codes that gave insight to the importance of written dialogue in responding to content-specific texts. Understanding statements provided insight of the levels of understanding present as students use written dialogue to record their responses to content-specific texts. The difference in word count and types of statements over the course of the study showed evidence of students becoming more comfortable in the use of dialogue journals over time as well as the increase in higher level understanding statements that can result from the use of dialogue journals for an extended period.

Findings from the motivational inventory show evidence of positive student perceptions of all five motivational constructs measured by the motivational inventory. This overall positive

perception of the dialogue journaling activity along with the meaning-making processes made visible through students' written responses indicate the influence using dialogue journals can have in a fourth-grade classroom. Implications for practice and research based on these findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Outcomes from observations, dialogue journals, and motivational inventories provide a holistic view that answers the research questions:

1. How do written responses of fourth-grade students made in dialogue journals express students' understandings of content-based lessons?

2. To what extent do dialogue journals motivate students in content-based lessons?

After addressing each of the research questions that guided this study, implications from this study for practicing teachers and researchers are discussed.

Research Question 1

Students' responses to content-based lessons were recorded in their dialogue journals. Developing student understandings of content-based literacy shared through written dialogue were analyzed into the various types of statements that appeared in journals. Looking at the statement types allowed me to draw conclusions about the discourse tendencies of students and illustrated the importance of using dialogue journals in content-based lessons.

Multiple findings contributed to answering the first research question. Statements made in dialogue journals showed evidence of varying levels of understanding regarding content knowledge. Students' use of statements in the conversational and reply themes illustrated the ability to use dialogue journals as a form of communicating with a classmate and Mrs. Frost about content-based lessons.

Varying levels of understanding. Students' written responses in dialogue journals when responding to content-based lessons provided insight into students' meaning-making processes. Attaching meaning to words as one constructs an understanding of a text is a complex process unique to each individual (Spivey, 1995). The dialogue journals provided a medium for students

to record transactions with literature (Rosenblatt, 2005) and transactions with other literacies used in social studies lessons. The journal entries and responses required students to synthesize information in a way that allowed for the construction of responses to generated knowledge in written format to share with a classmate. This process alone (that of creating a written response to information) prompted students to reflect on information and encouraged them to respond in an individualized, open-ended format. The most important thing gleaned from this study was the evidence that dialogue journals provided a space, which encouraged students to transact with others about content. Rosenblatt (1978) explained the creation of the poem by an individual as one reads, interprets, and creates their own understanding of a literary text. She describes the poem as being comprised of the nonlinear, continual transactions occurring between a reader and a text. The creation of the poem as one experiences a text is an ongoing, active, and complex process (Dewey, 1934; Rosenblatt, 1978).

Encouraging students to record even some of these kinds of transactions in dialogue journals could allow teachers and researchers to better understand the meaning-making responses taking place as students transact with content-specific texts.

Varying levels of understanding were present in students' responses. Students listed information often in both their entries and responses. These statements were coded as level 1 understanding statements because they showed only a basic level of understanding including the recall of information. Not only did these statements illustrate the lack of affect occurring as students were exposed to content-based texts, they also showed evidence of a non-aesthetic reading stance. With regards to Rosenblatt's (1978) definitions of efferent and aesthetic, the students did not appear to be reading in an effort to understand the meaningful structure of ideas presented in the text (efferent) or reading for the experience evoked by the text engaging

students' emotions as they transact with the literature (aesthetic). This may have reflected the understanding students hold that teachers only want and require the rote answering of general comprehension questions. This is important because it illustrates the lack of engagement in the reading process of students when working with content-based texts.

After using the journals for multiple weeks, student responses became more complex still including listed information but with an increase in *level 2* and *level 3 understanding statements*. Reaction statements appeared in both entries and responses of students, providing evidence of students' aesthetic responses to content texts. Unlike having students complete test-prep like questions after a content-based lesson, the use of dialogue journals with open-ended, unrestricted prompts by the teacher encouraged students to respond in a more authentic way. Students were encouraged to record their personal responses often coming out as reactions to information instead of simply restating information. The number of reaction statements greatly increased compared to other types of statements over the course of the study. This finding is important because it provided evidence of students beginning to adopt a more aesthetic reading stance. A progression from text-centered responses to more student-centered responses over time was also determined by Hancock (1993) and Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) in their analysis of dialogue journals with fictional texts.

Students also recorded inquiry questions in their journals. These questions (*level 2 understanding*) resulting from class lessons would not have been shared and possibly not have even originated if students were simply answering comprehension questions at the end of a lesson. Also, inquiry questions of those students who are uncomfortable raising their hands might have gone unanswered. This last idea leads to the importance of using dialogue journals as a communication tool in content-based lessons.

Journals as a communication tool. The journals provided a means of communicating about topics learned without raising hands and talking in front of the whole class. Often in class discussions, the same students participate while others may feel uncomfortable raising their hand to speak in front of the class. Dialogue journals allowed all students to communicate with others about content in a way that did not draw attention to any particular student. Also with classroom discussions, only a few students engage in conversation. With dialogue journals, every student in the class was engaged both in responding to content and in responding to their journaling partner, allowing each student to take part in dialogue at the same time.

Written dialogue in journals also showed evidence of students sharing different views about the same content. There was evidence of student opinions in dialogue journals. Therefore, journals allowed a platform for students to discuss content with a partner and share their opinions and reactions to the material being learned (Salcedo, 2009). The journals allowed students to write about what they were learning. They also allowed a space for students to disagree with one another, therefore showing students that content-specfic knowledge can be interpreted in multiple ways and reacted to differently based on individual differences including prior knowledge and personal experiences. The importance of findings related to journals used as a communication tool illustrated students' generation or reconsideration of knowledge not only from content-based texts but also to the dialogue about content that occurred in their journals.

Differences in statement categories. Student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and video-based journals were coded and analyzed separately. Part of this process included my creating the figures shared in chapter 4. As I compared the various figures representing statement types from the different parts of the dialogue journals, differences in statement categories were easy identifiable. These findings included differences in statement types between student-to-student

and student-to-teacher journals. These differences provided an understanding of the willingness

of students to authentically respond in regards to the journal audience. Differences in statement

types that appeared in student-to-student journals when responding to lessons as compared to

responding to the video at the end of the unit were enlightening in regards to the merit placed on

information from social studies lessons. The absence of some categories and appearance of new

categories is visible when comparing Figures 1, 2, and 3 from chapter 4.

  Student-to-teacher journals. Concerning journals as a communication tool, there were

differences in the types of statements that appeared in the student-to-student journals when

compared to the student-to-teacher journals. One expected difference was the lack of critique

statements as a reply by Mrs. Frost. This finding was not unexpected since students were

encouraged to write freely in their journals without concerning themselves with correct spelling

and grammar. Mrs. Frost commenting on conventional English use or writing techniques would

not have aligned with the non-threatening writing space she aimed to provide with dialogue

journals (Graves, 1983; Salcedo, 2009; Tunks, 2011). Disequilibrium statements were also not

present in Mrs. Frost's reply statements. Most of her responses were positive in nature and

focused more on encouraging students to reflect or expand on ideas written about with their

partner. This aligns with Atwell's (1998) thoughts regarding responses to students' journals

being personal and aiming to "affirm, challenge, or extend a reader's responses" (p. 283).

Disequilibrium statements among students included disagreement statements and possible

contradictions. Just as explained with comments regarding spelling and grammar, disequilibrium

statements could have interfered with the non-threatening writing space of dialogue journals if

Mrs. Frost would have made these types of statements. These findings are important because

they note the teacher's focus on responding to students in a positive manner with regards only to content knowledge.

Additional categories for student-to-teacher journals included compliments, foreshadowing statements, and reflective questions. The compliments showed evidence of Mrs. Frost being mainly positive in her responses to students. The categories of foreshadowing statements and reflective questions showed evidence of Mrs. Frost writing as a more knowledgeable participant. Her entries often asked students to further explain themselves or included inquiry questions and reflective questions. The large number of questions present in Mrs. Frost's entries set a more distinct purpose for student responses by requiring students to explain their understandings instead of simply responding to a text. Based on this finding, it would have been interesting to have had students complete Jones' (2009) MUSIC Inventory in regards to student-to-student journals and then in regards to student-to-teacher journals to determine if there were differences in perceptions of motivational constructions.

Findings relating the mean word count of journal entries and responses also highlighted major differences between student-to-student and student-to-teacher journals. Although the number of words per day averaged approximately the same in unit one regardless of whether students were responding to their partner or Mrs. Frost, this was not the case in unit two or the video-based journals. The ten-word difference in the number of words in responses to partners as compared to Mrs. Frost occurred in the second unit and a 61-word difference occurred in the video-based journals. This difference showed evidence of students writing more when they were responding to their classmate than to Mrs. Frost. This is important because the difference in word count along with differences in statement types showed evidence of a change in the authenticity of student responses based on whether the journal audience was their partner or the

teacher. These differences highlight the importance of noting that Mrs. Frost was writing as the "teacher" and not as an equal participant. Unlike when writing to Mrs. Frost, student responses with a partner showed evidence that the students felt free to be right or wrong with their journaling partner, which enhanced their ability to construct knowledge.

   Video-based journals. Differences in types of statements also occurred within student-to-student journals when looking at responses to daily social studies lessons as compared to responses to the Disney movie shown at the end of the second unit. The main differences with important implications included the absence of starter sentences and disequilibrium statements and the added categories of differences, commonalities, and opinion statements.

   The absence of starter sentences could be a result of students using their dialogue journals in a way more aligned with the ideas of Rosenblatt (1978). Students were to respond to the movie in their dialogue journal whenever they wanted as they watched the movie. This was different than daily social studies lessons in which Mrs. Frost would stop class for students to create an entry and then switch journals with their partner to respond. Mrs. Frost still stopped students throughout the movie class periods to allow for switching and responding to partners; however, entries were generated when the students felt necessary as they viewed the movie. This change in using the journals to record students' responses could account for why students did not spend time creating an introduction through writing starter sentences. As I read students' movie-based entries, I quickly noticed that they were to the point and lacked the flow and transition of journals from daily social studies lessons. Again, this is most likely a result of students recording responses as they felt necessary. Unlike the stopped class time in which students were given approximately five minutes to construct a response, video responses were composed of multiple ideas the student had at various times. This is important because it

showed that journals used in this way allowed for more authentic responses in that the students were not creating a response because of Mrs. Frost stopping class and expecting everyone to respond but instead recording responses as they occurred for the student.

Disequilibrium statements were also absent from student replies in the video-based journals. These statements included disagreement statements and possible contradictions. The absence of these categories in the video-based journals showed more agreement among students in regards to the video as compared to class materials. This is important because it ties in with the addition of the differences and commonalities categories. The appearance of these new categories along with the absence of disequilibrium statements in replies illustrated students' merit placed on class materials. A major percentage of student responses in video-based journals pointed out differences and/or commonalities between information presented in the movie as compared to information students had learned during class. The wording of differences made it clear that students considered information learned in class as factual and holistic, meaning that any alterations in the movie were automatically interpreted as incorrect. This finding is also interesting because it clarifies the authoritative role of Mrs. Frost in developing students' content knowledge. With students' constructing their understandings of social studies content solely based on what is presented by Mrs. Frost in class, her choice of materials and information is highly influential in students construction of content knowledge.

Opinions were another category created when analyzing video-based journals. These statements expressed students' opinions in regards to the video. Many students shared the opinion that the movie should have presented a more correct version of historical events. This again emphasizes the merit placed on class materials by students. One particular opinion shared in the previous chapter displayed one child's opinion that the movie not only should have been

more historically correct, but she also felt the movie presented altered facts for the purpose of including aspects to please an audience such as a princess falling in love. This is important because it shows that some students were not only analyzing and responding to the events or facts presented, but also responding to the author and purpose of a text and how that transpires into how information is presented. This level of text analysis is often a goal of language arts teachers but can obviously be achieved in the content area classroom when students are exposed to a variety of text presenting historical information in various ways.

Conclusion. Referring back to the first research question, fourth-grade students written responses in dialogue journals expressed students' understandings of content-based lessons in many ways. The journals provided students with a tool for communicating with their partner and teacher about content knowledge. The categories created as a result of qualitative data analysis showed the different types of responses present in student journals and levels of understanding that existed in the journal entries and responses. The differences in categories when looking at the student-to-student and student-to-teacher journals showed evidence of a change in how freely students responded based on the journal audience. Differences in student-to-student journals from daily lessons as compared to video-based lessons showed evidence of how students' used understandings generated during social studies lessons to determine the accuracy of a fictional portrayal of the same events.

Research Question 2

The results from student responses to Jones' (2009) MUSIC Inventory were used to answer the second research question. Students had positive answers regarding each of the five constructs. These results provided evidence that the use of dialogue journals in content-area classes was a motivating activity used to increase student engagement. All five constructs

measured in the inventory (empowerment, usefulness, success, interest, and caring) received a mean rating of three or above. With only five answers of "1" across all statements, it was clear that students viewed dialogue journals as a motivating activity.

Student comments shared in the observational data including, "Can we start doing these [dialogue journals] in science too?" also showed evidence of student interest. Based on this comment, the students enjoyed the activity enough to want to start using the journals in another content area. Applegate & Applegate (2011) found a significant increase in motivation as a result when students were expected to respond thoughtfully to literature, which is a goal of implementing dialogue journals. Observations showed evidence of a high level of engagement among students during journaling times which I also interpreted as interest.

The defensive statement that appeared in one of Mrs. Frost's initial entries could have had a negative effect on motivation. Based on the student responding in an apologetic way, this student could have lost interest because of the negative nature of this entry and would most likely experience a decrease in their perception of success and caring. As was explained in the previous chapter, it was difficult to determine the long-term effects of the defensive statement because of the length of the study. Also, because motivational inventories were completed anonymously, it was unclear as to whether or not this student rated certain constructs lower than others because of this exchange with Mrs. Frost.

Interest, one construct measured in the motivational inventory, was also shown in student dialogue journals by comments coded as general interest or interest statements. Although these statements showed evidence of students' interest related to content and not to the use of dialogue journals, interest could have been increased by using dialogue journals as a communication tool for students to discuss interesting knowledge from content lessons with a classmate. Dionisio

(1991) and Hancock (1993) also noted increased student interest as a result of implementing dialogue journals to foster a relationship among readers of a text.

Caring, another construct measured by the motivational inventory, was ranked highly by students. Evidence of teacher caring was shown in Mrs. Frost's replies in statements coded as compliments and agreement statements. Her responding to students on a weekly basis could have also provided students with the understanding that she was interested in their journal entries and responses. Mrs. Frost's remarks noting comments from specific dates in the journal signaled to students that she was reading each entry and response.

Overall, results from the motivational inventory, observational notes, and dialogue journal responses gave insight as to the extent to which dialogue journals motivate students' understandings of content-based lessons. Observational files and comments from dialogue journals supported the high averages of all constructs on the motivational inventory leading to the conclusion that dialogue journals were a motivating activity for students in content lessons.

Connecting the Research Questions

In answering the two research questions guiding this study, it also became clear that results from one research question could aid in understanding results for the other research questions. As discussed earlier, the change in expected reading stance and types of transactions with texts associated with the implementation of dialogue journals could have created a feeling of disequilibrium for students as compared to the general rote questioning often used to assess comprehension of content-based texts. This change in the way students respond could have accounted for the lower perceptions of success reported in MUSIC Model Inventories (Jones, 2009). If able to continue the implementation of dialogue journals over an extended period of time and transition into students responding freely as they did while watching the movie, student

perceptions of empowerment could also increase as students being more in control of recording their transactions with text.

Comments from observational notes, interest statements, and inventory results also worked together to illustrate students' interest in dialogue journals as a form of communication when responding to content-specific texts. Analyzing responses to Mrs. Frost's entries was also helpful in understanding students' perceptions of caring. I was not surprised by the high means for caring statements based on the positive nature of Mrs. Frost's entries noted both statement types and analytical files.

I am curious as to whether students' perceptions of interest was higher in lessons that elicited disagreement statements and possible contradictions. Because the state of disequilibrium can sometimes cause an increase in situational interest, I would like to conduct a similar study in which motivational inventories were conducted strategically following different lesson types to determine patterns between statement types and perceptions of motivational constructs.

These connections between the two research questions illustrate how the quantitative and qualitative data can work together in understanding the responses and motivational perceptions of dialogue journal use in an elementary classroom.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

Reflecting on evidence shared in answering the first research question, implications for using dialogue journals to improve teaching can be made in regards to students' understandings displayed through written dialogue. Along with answering the research questions, other findings allowed me to draw conclusions related to the use of dialogue journals in responding to content-based texts, which have implications for teaching and learning.

Teacher use of dialogue journals. The students' statements in the journals showed reactions to information presented in lessons or texts. The higher level thinking shown in some journal entries/responses not only helped students to create a written record of their growing understandings, but could also serve as an informal assessment tool for teachers (Walley & Kommer, 2000). Some lessons elicited more response statements than others. When students learned about the explorers sailing to the new world, they all seemed to share in feelings of disgust (aesthetic) as they learned about living conditions on the ships. Mrs. Frost could have capitalized on these reactions by following up with more information or focusing on the daily living conditions in later lessons. Further, she could have had students compare and contrast living conditions once on land as compared to on the ships, and possibly even what students thought about how the different types of people may have lived before leaving England.

This type of understanding encourages students to understand the facts of history in a more authentic way by envisioning the daily lives of people they are learning about. This type of thinking was sometimes present in journals where students shared vicarious experience statements. As noted by Rosenblatt (1995), literature can provide a living through of experiences that students might not otherwise encounter. This study expanded this idea to not only include literature as discussed by Rosenblatt but all content-specific literacy. Encouraging this type of thinking could engage students in analyzing history from a cultural perspective. This requires students to understand backgrounds and environmental conditions and stresses of the day instead of focusing only on memorization of facts.

Since journals were a communication tool, students showed evidence of *conversation statements*. Starter sentences and endings were two types of conversational statements that appeared in both entries and responses and could have teaching implications. The use of starter

sentences and endings provided evidence of students' understandings of creating introductions and conclusions when writing. In noticing these patterns among students, the teacher could offer a mini-lesson about text structures. Although students were not graded on journal entries and responses, this is one example of utilizing students' work to determine appropriate writing instruction. This is another benefit to writing across the curriculum.

Disagreement and possible contradiction statements in replies. Disagreement statements appeared in responses and were those statements made when a student did not agree with a statement or opinion from their partner's initial entry. Possible contradiction statements also appeared in responses and included explanations moving past disagreement statements to offer a different opinion or correct a fact from an initial entry. To make the most out of disagreement statements, they could be brought forth by the teacher for the purpose of engaging the class in extended conversations about content. Statements could ignite a desire to learn more and/or better explain one's opinions to persuade others of their viewpoints.

Possible contradiction statements from replies could be used in a similar way. As with disagreement statements, the teacher could use these with the class to ignite further research on a given topic and encourage clarity in explaining and defending one's views. If integrating writing instruction with content area teaching further than dialogue journal use, these disagreement statements and possible contradictions could be the origin of a persuasive paper.

Bringing together thoughts from disagreement and possible contradiction statements in replies, this type of information could be useful for the teacher in planning future lessons. The teacher may engage students in further dialogue about disagreements shared in journals, or create an extension activity for students to further explore and defend their ideas. Disagreements between both existing information and information presented in literacy materials in social

studies lessons, as well as those disagreements between journaling partners in their reactions and interpretations of literacy materials are important in constructing knowledge. As Dewey (2011) notes, a state of uncertainty is the origin of thinking. A teacher who designs instruction to explore disagreements and possible contradictions that arise in dialogue journals in a whole class setting, can promote reflective thought as students build and rework their current understandings.

Questions in dialogue journals. Students often did not answer all of Mrs. Frost's questions when they responded to her. She could address this such that students engage actively in responding through the back and forth dialogue of the journals. She could also note questions not answered by students and use those to plan instruction as a way of ensuring students understand the content the teacher aims to deliver. Questions from dialogue journals could also be taken from student entries for the teacher to use in future lessons. These questions posed by students revealed genuine inquiries of students and could therefore increase empowerment and interest of students if the teacher were to address the questions.

Conventional use of standard English. While reading student journal entries and responses, the teacher could also make notes about students' needs regarding writing instruction. Although journals, as used in this study, were meant to provide an outlet for students to share responses about what they were learning without the threatening pen marks associated with grading, the teacher could still learn from student mistakes present in entries. These common errors made by students could be addressed in mini-lessons, literacy centers, or incorporated into the teacher's reply statements to illustrate correct usage.

One example of common errors I noticed while reading and coding journals was spelling mistakes. Some of these errors occurred when students were spelling difficult words that the students rarely used or proper nouns naming the various Native American tribes they were

learning about. There were many more common errors involving often used words. For instance, students were often using "to" and "too" incorrectly. Another homophone often used incorrectly was "their" and "there". With this second example, students generally used "there" all of the time regardless of the correct homophone that should have been used. Based on these common errors among multiple students, the teacher could plan mini-lessons to address topics of high need that appeared in students' journal writings. Obtaining information about student writing needs in this informal way allows teachers to determine and plan instruction based on actual needs and developmental readiness of students instead of simply moving through a pacing guide or other one-size-fits-all curriculum map.

   Time required of teacher. Mrs. Frost responded to students in the backs of their dialogue journals each week of the study except one. In talking with her about the time taken to respond to students, she felt the responses were important for students' engagement in the dialogue journals but also demanding of her time. Although it did not seem like much of a time commitment to Mrs. Frost before starting the study, she realized as the study continued that along with all of her other teacher responsibilities, journaling to students on a weekly basis was not ideal. She continued to respond to students on a weekly basis because she felt it was beneficial to students' growing knowledge and conversations occurring in the journals. She could have also felt she needed to continue with weekly responses because of the study. The time commitment necessary to respond to each child's journal is a main concern for implementing dialogue journals (Tompkins, 2012; Tunks, 2011).

   In talking with Mrs. Frost about efficient implementation, we discussed possible changes such as using the dialogue journals differently by having the teacher read entries weekly or perhaps more often and mention thoughts from student journal entries and responses during class

lessons. This would ensure that students knew the teacher was reading their journals, help integrate students' personal thinking into future lessons, and eliminate the time required of the teacher to respond to each child in writing.

      Conclusion. The implications for practicing teachers mostly reflect how dialogue journal entries can be used to inform instruction. Written discourse of students in journals could be used by practicing teachers to determine content interest and inquiries as well as topics, which elicit disagreement among students. Written discourse in journals could also be used to determine the writing needs of students such as common errors made in regards to the conventional use of standard English. These ideas use dialogue journals as a means of data collection in regards to students' understandings of content knowledge as well as an informal diagnostic tool for writing, grammar, and spelling needs. Lastly, suggestions regarding the time commitment necessary to implement dialogue journals reflected ideas discussed by Mrs. Frost and I for gaining assessment data from the journals in an effective and efficient way.

Implications for Researchers

      It is evident that incorporating writing across the curriculum could help both teachers and researchers to better understand the meaning-making processes of students when exposed to content-specific lessons. Using dialogue journals in other content areas, such as science, could help determine the meaning-making responses of students to other content-based texts. The suggestion of integrating writing into the science curriculum is also suggested by Akerson and Young (2005) as a way of advancing student thinking and providing an assessment of students' understandings to teachers.

      I wonder what changes in findings would occur if conducting a similar study using computers for journaling. A study conducted by Spiker (2014) explored the use of online

journaling with student teachers and found the journals to "be a place for students to reflect honestly, share frustrations and stresses, and get support from me and their peers" (p. 7). With the positive results shared in using computer journaling as a communication tool for student teachers to communicate with their university supervisors, it would be beneficial to explore the potential in using computer journaling with younger students in the classroom setting. Peterson and Porter (2014) also explored the use of computers as a literacy response tool for students. In their study, students used collaborative wiki writing in which they read other's writings and discussed writings in wiki groups. Peterson and Porter (2014) reported that although a differentiation in knowledge processes was discernable, there was greater evidence of knowledge-telling processes than knowledge-transforming process in present in students' writings. Even if the responses did not show evidence of the amount of higher-level thinking that was hoped for, the study does show evidence of positive results in using wikis as a communication tool for students as they respond to literacy.

Based on the student comment shared in the observation noted in chapter 4, at least one student was able to make the connection between the dialogue occurring in the journals and that made possible through platforms such as Google Classroom. The use of hashtags and emoji's present in multiple journals also shows evidence of students making connections and using language familiar in everyday technology communication in their dialogue journals. Using the same study parameters with the use of computers could also allow students to respond to lessons and text and to their partner at any time. Because of the restriction of waiting for the teacher to stop students in order to exchange journals and respond to their partner, students' ability to freely respond was hindered. This modification to the study would be more aligned with Rosenblattt's (1978) ideas expressed in the Transactional Theory of Literacy.

I am also curious as to the findings that would result from investigating the use of dialogue journals in other content areas. More recently, Oliveira (2015) reported on his study findings of students' non-fictional literacy skills related to science instruction. In analyzing student literacy skills during science read-alouds, he found that students showed evidence of both transaction-centered and transmission-centered responses. Another finding explained that students' adoption of reading strategies were consistent with the teacher's perception of content reading. These findings solidify the necessity to investigate student responses in various content areas as well as with different teachers in the same content area.

I wonder how students' perceptions of motivational constructs change over a school year if dialogue journals are consistently implemented. In terms of the motivational inventory used, future studies could have students complete the MUSIC Inventory (Jones, 2009) multiple times over the course of the study. This data could be used to determine if students' perceptions of the various measured constructs of motivation change as a result of how long the journals have been implemented or the unit topic. I only had Mrs. Frost administer Jones' (2009) MUSIC Inventory at the end of the second study. Because using dialogue journals was new to students, motivational perceptions could decrease once the activity has been used for multiple units. Based on observational files and high averages from the inventories, inventory results would have most likely not shown a decrease had they been completed at the end of each unit in the study. Having students complete the inventory again approximately every four to six weeks while continuing to use dialogue journals could provide more insight as to the perceptions of motivation for long-term use of journals.

It would also be interesting to conduct short interviews with students throughout the study to better understand their perception and definition of success. Based on the findings

related to success from the motivational inventories along with the increase in level 3 understanding statements and reaction statements from the first to the second unit, I am curious as to whether students would begin to perceive their ability to be successful with dialogue journals higher with continued use. I am also curious as to how their definition of success would change as they continued to be expected to record text transactions instead of the teacher relying solely on rote questioning.

Inventories such as the writing survey used in Clark's (2009) study to determine participants' position towards writing could also be used to better understand students' attitudes directly related to writing. This tool could be used at the beginning and end of the study in a pre-test, post-test design to detect changes in personal perspectives of students related to writing attitude. How a writer feels about himself is one of the main causes of variance in student writing abilities (Graves, 1983). By including both a motivational inventory and writing inventory, students motivational perceptions of the task as well as changes in one's beliefs related to their writing abilities could be determined.

The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MQR) developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey developed by McKenna and Kear (1990) are examples of inventories used for collecting data on students' motivation to read. These types of inventories could also be used while implementing dialogue journals to determine the effects of dialogue journals on motivation to read in the content areas. By administering this type of inventory multiple times before implementing dialogue journals and multiple times once dialogue journals have been implemented, data could be compared to determine any change in motivation to read content-based texts resulting from the implementation of journals.

These ideas regarding implications for future research explore the possibilities of using computers to journal and using more data collection tools to obtain information regarding students' attitudes toward writing and reading. The research ideas discussed could help develop an understanding of the possible benefits resulting from integrating dialogue journal writing into content-based lessons.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the use of pencil and paper journals as opposed to using computers for journaling. If they had been using computers for the journaling, students may have been more likely to respond throughout lessons and literacy encounters rather than being restricted to times when Mrs. Frost stopped the class to write in and exchange journals. The advantage to this modification would be using dialogue journals in a way more aligned with Rosenblatt's (1978) Transactional Theory of Literary Work. Using computers to journal would allow for students to respond in their journal when they felt necessary which could yield different results as was seen in the video-based journals. Students being able to respond when they want instead of when the teacher prompts them to respond could encourage more authentic responses.

Another limitation was the length of the study. The study took place over two social studies units lasting approximately two and half months. A similar study following the use of dialogue journals over an entire school year could yield more conclusive results about the levels of motivation of the students as well as changes in types of responses.

In addition, the study was only conducted in one class and in one subject area. Collecting and analyzing data in multiple classes and multiple subject areas might yield more expansive results. Conducting a similar study in different types of schools and with different populations of

students could also yield more expansive results. In conducting a similar study with other populations, it would be helpful to strategically plan the measures taken to secure student confidentiality while also being able to identify students by characteristics such as gender and academic ability. Analyzing results related to student characteristics could yield conclusions about how different groups of students respond to content-based texts differently.

Conclusion

Responding in written form to content-based texts allowed students to record their developing understandings of content knowledge. In coding journal statements, I was able to identify the varying levels of understanding among students. The most interesting finding of the study was the difference in statement types between student-to-student journals when responding to daily social lessons as opposed to the video shown at the end of the second unit. These differences illustrated the change in types of student responses that occurred during exposure to different forms of content-based texts. Peaks in the number of certain types of statements, such as reaction statements and disequilibrium statements, were also seen following certain social studies lessons. This increased amount of certain statement types showed evidence of types of student responses being related to the material being presented. The results of the study including word count findings, qualitative journal analysis, and observational files clearly showed evidence of dialogue journals being a motivating way of having students express their understandings of content-based texts.

The dialogue journals used in the study capitalized on using communication as students constructed new knowledge and reevaluated existing knowledge during social studies lessons. Different categories under the reply statements theme showed evidence of students making meaning through their responses to text as well as their responses to their partner highlighting the

importance of dialogue in content-based lessons. Based on the positive results of the

motivational inventory and data from observational files, dialogue journals were an effective and

motivating communication tool.

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Appendix A

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory- elementary school version

Directions   **Date: _____**

These questions ask you about what you worked on today in this class (the teacher will tell you what it was). Please think about only this as you answer these questions. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please pick one of the numbers from 1 to 4 below and write it in the blank next to the question.

1	2	3	4
No	Maybe	Yes	Definitely, Yes!

_____ 1. I was able to do a good job.

_____ 2. I liked what I did.

_____ 3. What I learned could help me in school.

_____ 4. I knew I could do well.

_____ 5. I could do it my way.

_____ 6. My teacher was helpful.

_____ 7. It was useful to me.

_____ 8. What I did was interesting.

_____ 9. My teacher cared about how well I did.

_____ 10. It was easy to do.

_____ 11. I made decisions.

_____ 12. What I did was fun.

_____ 13. I can use what I learned.

_____ 14. My teacher likes me.

_____ 15. I had choices.