

LISTEN, WRITE, SPEAK: DISCUSSION AND JOURNALING
IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH CLASSROOM

By Jessie K. Sage

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By

Jessie Sage

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By

Lester Krupp, M.A., Member of the Faculty

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the effects of journaling on participation in classroom discussions. The intention was to conduct a study to show the ways in which journaling can be used as a successful strategy for students to improve their ability to prepare for and participate in a class discussion. This was done by having students journal before discussions, watching how students acted during discussions, recording observations about students, and having students take a survey about their feelings about journaling and discussion. This study highlights the ways in which journaling can be used in a sixth-grade classroom as a strategy to help students participate in class discussions and to organize their thoughts for discussion.

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CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the secondary English language arts classroom, discussion among classmates is something that is essential to constructing knowledge with one's peers, achieving understanding, and making deeper connections with texts. The Common Core State Standards require teachers to guide students through speaking and listening skills so that students can leave school with the ability to present their ideas verbally and to be open to listening to the ideas of others. But many students associate discussion with negative school experiences, and the anxieties involving these memories inhibit articulation of ideas. This tension is what inspired me to explore the relationship between journaling and discussion in the classroom as a way to support deeper learning.

While working in the secondary classroom, there are often times where I found that students in one-on-one conversations had much to say about their learning, but when the conversation expanded to the whole class, silence became the norm. Many students turned in papers filled with ideas and questions, but these never left the page because students felt that their ideas were not good enough to share with their peers (Alvermann, D., Hinchman, K., Moore, D., Phelps, J., Thrash, E., Young, J. & Zalewski, P., 1996). Students perceived discussion as a time where both their teacher and their peers were evaluating them, and if the student felt her ideas weren't what was looked for, she did not share. But students produced ideas on paper and in one-on-one conversation that could have benefitted the whole class as a discussion topic. This phenomenon led me to research why students felt

comfortable expressing themselves in their writing but not in their verbal articulation. How could I, as a teacher, provide an academic process that allowed students to articulate their relevant ideas on both paper and in classroom discussions?

Classroom Discussion and Journaling: Moving Past Teacher Centered Discussions

Discussion in the classroom is often teacher centered. Alvermann et al. (1996) characterized teacher-centered discussion as those discussions in which the teacher asks questions and students answer them, rather than students asking questions of each other in order to formulate ideas together. In teacher-centered discussions, students look for the right answers or attempt to prove themselves socially to their peers and to their teacher (Alvermann et al., 1996). Journaling, however, provides a place for students to ask authentic questions and to test out their learning in a non-threatening medium rather than waiting for a teacher to present a teacher-centered, closed question. Journals are a less threatening medium because they can be based in inquiry rather than criticism and correction (Rueda, 1992). The apprehension that students possess toward formal writing outside of journals is similar to the apprehensiveness that they hold about discussion (Jansen, A. 2006; Nordby, Perry, & VandeKamp, 2003). Teachers face the challenge of connecting authentic questions about ideas that students express in journals to discussion while preserving their authenticity. How can educators use these two useful activities in mutually beneficial ways while also increasing student learning?

Posing questions can be a powerful activity in journal writing. When students are allowed to ask general questions about the content, they write longer journal entries (Connor-Greene, 2000; Rueda, 1992). The length of entries, however, shows that students want to write more when they have the opportunity to ask questions about the content, explore what they are learning, and reference their own experience (Waywood, 1994). Journals give students a chance to test out new thinking within the context of their existing knowledge and understanding. Because of this, teachers can then communicate with students in order to push them to further their learning as well as help students who are struggling (Waywood, 1994). This communication can take the form of dialogue journals (where students write and the teacher responds) or with asking students to talk about their writing in discussion. Journals allow students to reference their own experience, ask questions about content and test out their thinking in a less threatening format. These actions provide useful preparation for subsequent discussions as well as a valuable way for students to explore ideas raised in prior discussions.

Working with students' writing and observing their discussions showed that students had a hard time expressing their thoughts aloud in a large group. Although in writing conferences students were open to what they were thinking about, during discussion the students had a hard time presenting their ideas. This observation prompted the question of whether journaling could provide students a medium that would both allow students to explore and organize their ideas and also reduce students' later apprehension in discussions.

Literature Review

Journal Writing in the Classroom

Journals are used in classrooms in various ways, including purposes such as individual student inquiry, attending to cognitive strategy skills (predicting, summarizing and reflecting), and dialogue journals that allow students and teacher to communicate with each other in a private setting (Collins et al., 2012; Rueda, 1992). Journals are often considered to be a step away from the traditionally teacher-centered instruction that has been prevalent in classrooms in the past (Dyment & O'Connell, 2010). In the case of dialogue journals, it is better for the teacher to play the role of guide in the dialogue rather than making corrections (Rueda, 1992). This is not to say that teachers cannot give criticism or guidance to their students through journals. Criticism, when given in a way that is sensitive to a students' needs and feelings, is valuable because it gives students a clear idea of what is expected in their journaling (Dyment & O'Connell, 2010). The dialogue format fosters a safe environment for students to ask general questions about content and academic ideas that they are working with in their learning process (Rueda, 1992). The frequency of journal entries also serves as a successful way to improve writing skills and confidence (Darhower, 2004).

Allowing students to ask general content questions and to express academic thinking processes elicits lengthier journal entries (Rueda, 1992.) Although length alone does not increase students' learning, a longer entry does increase the

opportunity to ask general questions and make meaning (Connor-Greene, 2000; Rueda, 1992). Journals give students a chance to experiment with inquiry by asking questions, making inferences, and summarizing, all of which are useful for student learning and prepare valuable ideas for discussion (Collins et al., 2012; Connor-Greene, 2000; Rueda, 1992).

Clear expectations, examples and scaffolding must be set in place for journal writing to benefit students in the ways mentioned above. Dymment and O'Connell (2010) showed that students had varying levels of experience with journaling as well as experience with different types of journaling. Many of these students had experiences with journaling outside of school in their personal lives, but this type of journaling is not what was desired in the classroom, and therefore teachers needed to give examples of new types of classroom journal writing. To avoid further confusion, one teacher in this study wrote an example journal entry in front of the entire class, asking the students what they felt made the journal entry useful or not useful. This also gave the students a chance to critique their teacher's writing and created a sense of rapport between teacher and students (Dymment & O'Connell, 2010, p. 238).

In the study done by Dymment and O'Connell (2010), the teachers gave a brief introduction to the purpose of the journals, but they did not define journaling or explain the purposes it serves both inside and outside the classroom. The researchers in this study drew upon literature, research, and their practice as teachers to explore how professors in higher education could improve the quality of reflection in student journals. This study took place in a college nursing class where

thorough presentation of journals was not required. This study showed that students often produced entries that were deeply reflective.

The narrow context of this study limits its transferability. This study shows the need for students to be given examples of what a journal entry should look like for the teacher's purposes. Dymont and O'Connell (2010) acknowledge that their study has weak transferability because the researchers should have selected a group of people with similar experiences with journaling, rather than a group of people with varying degrees of experience with journals. Had their sample been more purposefully selected, the researchers argued, the study would have yielded more universally applicable results. The researchers gathered their literature by searching for articles using online databases using the keywords *journal*, *journaling*, *journal writing*, and *reflective writing*. The researchers felt that this was the best way to find articles that were from interdisciplinary academic contexts and were most relevant to their work in this study.

The research done in this study relied heavily upon consulting with focus groups throughout the study in order to measure what they thought about journaling and reflective writing as the study went on. These focus groups were made up of the research subjects and allowed for researchers to member check their interpretation of their data with their research subjects.

Apprehension About Discussion and Writing

There are various attitudinal problems that arise with writing and discussion both inside and outside of the classrooms. Parents' values about literacy influence students in many ways, both positive and negative (Nordby, Perry, & VandeKamp,

2003). Since literacy directly affects both journal writing and discussion, it is advantageous to examine the literacy history of students. Nordby, Perry, and VandeKamp (2003) describe *bottom-top values*, which they define as the belief that literacy learning is solely for things like decoding words and reading signs. When parents hold these values, students can be influenced to think that the writing involved with literacy was simply work, rather than a useful activity that could be valued outside of a classroom. The classroom writing exercises that bottom-top students performed made students see literacy as work, not as something that could be pleasurable or fun (Nordby et al., 2003). The researchers assert that bottom-top value holding parents equated feedback from school with their children doing well in classes and when feedback did not occur they felt concerned that students were not doing well. This holds relevance because the students whose parents hold bottom-top values might not feel that journals are valuable because many methods used in journaling do not rely heavily on the feedback that the teacher provides in journals.

Nordby et al. (2003) found that writing was often equated with summative assessments. Many low-achieving students were more concerned with performance than mastery in their writing, and they often lacked motivation. Because of this emphasis on summative assessment, even high-achieving students took criticism poorly which then contributed to reluctance to re-read, edit, and revise. Such past experiences with writing led many students to equate journal writing with their past experiences of writing, which then made students hold back in their journals because of fear of producing the wrong answer (Nordby et al., 2003; Rueda, 1992. In

another study, though, Cornelius and Herrenkohl (2004) found that these apprehensions can be avoided if the teacher maintains a clear picture of what is expected out of students in their journal writing.

The apprehensiveness that students feel towards writing is similar to the feelings they hold about discussion (Jansen, 2006; Nordby, et al., 2003). One problem that arises with discussion is rooted in students' definition of discussions (Collins et al., 2012). To help students develop a clear understanding of what a discussion entails, it is the responsibility of the teacher to set clear speaking and listening expectations and definitions of what it means to engage in a whole-class discussion (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004). Jansen (2006) elaborated the many social aspects of discussion that influence students' decisions and feelings toward participation in discussion. These aspects include giving the right answer, helping their peers to participate in discussion and the desire to look smart in front of peers. Similarly, there are instances where students feel that their discourse is not valued in a discussion, and thus students do not want to participate in discussion (Jansen, 2006). With the social aspects of discussion and the discourse disconnect that students are experiencing, it appears that there needs to be some connection between how comfortable students feel writing in journals and discussions they have with their classmates (Jansen, 2006; Sperling, 1996).

The Speaking and Writing Connection for ELLs

The main discourse of classrooms is based in White middle-class discourses, which requires teachers to work with the spoken discourses of their students who are not white or middle class to build strategies to teach writing in order to foster

strategies that are relevant to their students (Sperling, 1996). This is especially true for ELLs in the mainstream classroom who, even with interventions that have shown to improve L2 proficiency, feel that they have a hard time contributing to discussion (Irby et al., 2008). Many schools now use an immersion structure that places ELL students in mainstream classes. Language transfer does occur, but it is dependent largely on the student's previous education in her native language (Carrell, Carson, Kroll, Kuehn, & Silberstein, 1990).

There is a connection between speaking and writing in ELL students that allows their bilingual abilities to be used as a tool for literacy (Moll, Saez & Dworin, 2001). Children who are bilingual start as early as kindergarten to differentiate the ways in which writing in their native language is similar to text in English (with the exception of character-based text languages like Chinese and Japanese). These children also are fully aware of the communicative powers of written and spoken language (Moll, Saez & Dworin, 2001).

ELL teachers call upon the literacy skills that ELL students already possess in their daily process of translation. Orellana and Reynolds (2008) studies teachers who used dialogue journaling and reading aloud as activities for translation practice. Using translation as literacy practice in the classroom not only gave students an awareness of audience but also enabled them to communicate what they learned from their readings rather than just what the text said. The dialogue journals included entries that allowed students to write in their native language. When students were permitted to participate in wordplay between their native language and English, they were much more enthusiastic and participatory in class

as well as providing higher quality translations (Orellana & Reynolds, 2008). Allowing students to write in both their native language and English is one way that the discourses of ELLs were allowed in the classroom and were used to elicit student learning (Sperling, 1996). When students operate in discourses in which they are comfortable, students learn to use both languages as tools for thinking in a literary setting (Alvermann et al., 1996; Moll et al., 2001). Using journals as the writing task gave students a place to become aware of the difficulty that comes with learning a second language and for the teacher to comment and scaffold in various ways to help with that difficulty (Darhower, 2004). If ELL students are allowed to journal in their native tongue and then translate their thoughts into English so that they can participate in discussions, the students are better able to make meaning out of the literacy learning that is taking place (Alvermann et al., 1996; Moll et al., 2001; Orellana, & Reynolds 2008; Sperling, 1996).

Self-Efficacy in Discussion and Journaling

Self-efficacy is the ability that students perceive themselves to possess in situations of difficulty or situations where a student is learning a new skill (Bandura, 1993). Bandura states that students with higher senses of self-efficacy tend to perceive their abilities to take on challenges in a positive light, even in the face of difficulty. Bandura also states that students with a lower sense of self-efficacy will perceive their abilities as not good enough to take on challenges and will focus on four negative scenarios. In social learning situations, students often compare themselves to their peers, which can affect self-efficacy in both positive and negative

ways (Bandura, 1993). Because of the social nature of classroom discussions, self-efficacy in relation to social construction of learning must be considered.

There are various emotional and social needs that students experience during discussions due to the risks that are involved in choosing to participate in discussion (Jansen, 2006). Many students associate discussions with high-risk situations and attribute many negative feelings to discussion participation because of their previous experiences, therefore, giving them a lower sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Jansen, 2006). In research with seventh graders, Jansen (2006) found that these all-too-common negative experiences caused many students to feel comfortable contributing to discussion only when they felt their comments were absolutely correct, and also to avoid saying incorrect answers in class. To add further anxiety for students who have negative feelings about discussion, students believe that participation in discussion affects their grades (Alvermann et al., 1996). In order to raise a self-efficacy in discussion, journaling could help students to see they have the ability to formulate ideas in written form, thereby showing them they have the ability to take on the task of formulating their ideas in a verbal discussion (Bandura, 1994; Urzua, 1987).

Allowing students to use journaling as a place for processing knowledge gives students a sense of power in their use of language to not only demonstrate knowledge but also to demonstrate their progress toward enduring understandings (Urzua, 1987). Journaling is a useful tool that aids students in their application of the content material they are learning (Connor-Greene, 2000). In a study conducted by

Connor-Greene (2000), implementing journaling at a high frequency gave students a chance to practice writing and increased their confidence in their writing.

The study done by Connor-Greene (2000) was a quasi-experimental study involving junior college students in a psychology class. The journals were used by students in ways that allowed them to dialogue with the professor about the theories they were studying. The journals were kept throughout the class as an assignment where students were asked to apply theories to outside sources such as television and song lyrics and to ask questions about the theories. The study had two groups of students, one that had the journal assignment and one that wasn't.

The students that had the journal assignment had significantly higher grades than the class that didn't journal. Connor-Greene's sample size was relatively small (53 students) and stretched over a span of two years, the control group taking place in the previous year rather than simultaneously with the test group. Connor-Greene did address the time differences in the two groups saying that the two classes took place at the same time of year, but the results might have been different because of the time differences. This study did provide insight into the fact that journals gave students a chance to integrate their experiences into their learning and allowed them to ask questions and to test out their thinking in concepts they felt they had mastered as well as ones they were having difficulty with (Connor-Greene, 2000).

Connor-Greene's study was credible in that the classrooms that were used in the study were from public universities. The researcher's interpretations of the data were based upon knowledge of the students, knowledge of the practices of teaching psychology, and how journals changed the practice of teaching psychology. The

description provided by the researchers gave readers specific findings and new information about the practice in ways that made findings transferable if hypothetically placed in different study situation. The samples used for this study were two classes, one that journaled and one that didn't, both of which were non-random test groups of appropriate size for the research.

Journaling gave students a chance to test their thinking which consisted of stating their thinking strategies and then receiving feedback from the teacher about that process (Connor-Greene, 2000). Journals also give students a chance to practice their general writing skills in a medium that was not high-pressure assignment (Darhower, 2004). Journaling overall, improved the way students learn literacy skills for writing (Urzua, 1987). All of these things that students achieve when they journal are important skills and provide students a chance to practice their skills in a non-threatening medium.

Successful Conditions for Discussion

In order to successfully use discussion in the classroom, a teacher have a knowledge of her students and be able to set up the discussion in a way that elicits student participation and understanding. There are several ways in which discussion can be used successfully in classrooms. One of the first techniques that has been shown to engage students in discussion is to choose subjects of discussion that are relevant to students in order to elicit content interest from students (Janzen, 2007). The choosing of these subjects and texts requires an extensive knowledge of student's discourses, which allows students to build knowledge through a familiar vernacular (Collins et al., 2012).

Another important factor is the students' level of comfort in expressing their ideas and questions. Students feel comfortable when they interact in small groups with students who share a similar discourse so that they feel able to communicate with one another (Alvermann et al., 1996). Students prefer these small groups because they don't have to wait for everyone else to talk in order to share their ideas. Small-group discussion gives students a more comfortable space to try out their thinking and to establish what they are trying to articulate; students can share personal connections with the text (Alvermann et al., 1996) The comfort that students associate with small groups is a valuable step toward students feeling comfortable in the large group discussions.

Once students are arranged for discussion, there is the task of presenting a topic and eliciting discussion. Teachers must spend a lot of time initiating discussion among students, which eventually can lead to more student-initiated questions and responses (Arausz & Wells, 2006). Teacher-initiated questions may elicit more student discussion and lead to student inquiry when those questions elicit multiple answers. Arausz and Wells (2006) assert that when students participate in discussion and progress naturally in dialogue, there needs to be extra time built into lessons that allow for the discussion to continue without time constraints. This measure is just one step that can lead to successful discussions in the classroom.

Another important aspect is communicating expectations and behaviors for discussion (Alvermann et al., 1996; Jansen, 2006). Disposition-building is important in discussions and involves the importance of accepting the risks of discussion participation where students share their thinking. Teachers can encourage students

to share their thinking processes rather than produce the right answer (Jansen, 2006). There should be a focus on the expectations for dispositions in the discussion rather than on the content-specific learning that is expected to happen during the discussion (Jansen, 2006). Along with these disposition expectations, there needs to be clear communication of expectations for what is to be accomplished in the discussion. These expectations include how to act when someone is talking and how to respond in a respectful way (Alvermann et al., 1996). The communication of these two expectations fosters the idea of students needing to develop their dispositions for discussion through their acceptance of the benefit from sharing their processes with one another (Alvermann et al., 1996; Jansen, 2006).

Successful discussion also requires that teachers attend to power dynamics. The power that certain students feel they possess in a discussion can greatly affect the discussion because it excludes students from the learning happening in discussion (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004). There is a technique called uptake where a teacher reiterates what a student has said in order to present it to the whole class for discussion (Adler & Rougle, 2005). This is a way for teachers to scaffold the discussion in order to keep students involved in the discussion. When a conversation is dominated by students, a teacher can use uptake to transfer the power in the conversation to the rest of the class, asking students if they agree with their classmates. In a study done by Cornelius and Herrenkohl (2004), researchers found that teachers who regularly uptake students' ideas and questions give the speaker a sense of increased power or status in the conversation. Partisanship is

one way that power and status gets other students involved with the discussion through inactive students agreeing with active students in the discussion. Students agreeing with their peers created partisanship, where students sided with their classmates and contributed to the discussion in order to aid in their classmate's ideas. In a sixth-grade science classroom, the use of prompting questions to promote partisanship in discussions gave the students a sense of involvement in their own learning, thereby giving them more motivation to stay involved in learning (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004).

Advantages to Using Journals and Discussions

Writing demonstrates the cognitive processes achieved in content learning and therefore serves as evidence of learning (Bangert-Downs, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004). In the same way, discussion can be a way for students to demonstrate cognitive processes in the midst of their development (Alvermann et al., 1996; Bangert-Downs, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004). Writing and speaking are connected in that each student carries unique cultural backgrounds and discourses that form how they learn (Sperling, 1996). Students express themselves linguistically through writing and discussion differently depending on their cultural backgrounds and on social pressures they feel from their peers (Alvermann et al., 1996; Sperling, 1998). Journaling proved to be an effective way for students to practice and gain exposure to more formal writing in the classroom (Janzen, 2007). Giving students training in various ways of writing and then allowing students to use those skills in prewrites enriches understanding, meaning making and demonstration of knowledge (Klein & Rose, 2010).

Journaling and discussion have a wide variety of advantages that increase students' learning and understanding. Discussion gives students a way to attend to vocabulary both inside and outside the text and to co-construct knowledge with their peers (Alvermann et al., 1996). Journals have the capacity to connect class content to the lives of students outside of the classroom by calling upon the experiences of students, which can be elicited through the dialogue journal process (Langer, 2001). Through practice in writing, journals give students tools for writing and reading outside of school. This creates more thoughtful learning and better understandings because of connections to the outside world (Hull & Schultz, 2001). This process then creates a stronger relationship between teacher and student (Hudson, 1995). Dialogue journals give students and teachers a way to communicate with one another in a more intimate and private way so that students don't go unnoticed in the classroom (Hudson, 1995)

The most advantage in journals and discussions occurs when the two activities merge and work upon one another to make connections to the lives of students, allowing them to test out their learning, helping students acknowledge one another's feelings, and to connecting these explorations to classroom content (Alvermann et al., 1996; Hudson, 1995; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Langer, 2001).

Research Question: Bridging the Gap Between Discussion and Journal Writing.

Students learning to integrate the ideas they explore in journals into discussion could be beneficial at both for individual students and for the collective understanding of a whole class. These two areas elicit similar behaviors patterns among students but also elicit behaviors separately that are applicable for all

content areas, and can be useful as literacy skills. Journals allow for students to make meaning and connections that students could then offer to their peers. If journaling allows students to formulate their ideas and record their processes, discussion could be a place where they share those processes with their peers. How does journaling affect participation and engagement in discussion?

In this qualitative research study I was the student teacher in the classroom as well as the teacher-researcher. A qualitative research approach was chosen because of the nature of the research question. This question arose in my earlier practicum observations when I noticed that certain students had difficulty participating in class discussions. These students often preferred to demonstrate their knowledge in written form rather than orally. I also noticed students who participated in discussion actively but had trouble demonstrating their knowledge in written form. I began to want a better understanding of the relationship between writing and discussion participation. I hoped to learn more about how to use students' strengths in one area to strengthen their abilities in another, specifically how to connect the skills students use in journal writing to a subsequent discussion setting. I hoped to develop students' skills of inquiry and exploration through journaling, and I examined the effects of journaling as these appeared in discussions. This study focused on how a student's abilities in journal writing could be used to elicit participation in discussion and to support specific, valuable discussion behaviors. This study also captured students' feelings about journaling and participation in discussion as well as how the two are connected and how they influenced by each other. Through researching this question, I hoped to build a

bridge between the learning and expression that takes place in a student's journal and the learning that can take place in discussion if students take the steps to cross that bridge.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

Action and Practice

This study focused on the classroom practice of journaling. I used journaling as a tool to encourage specific behaviors in classroom discussion. I focused on the different ways that students interact with each other in discussion, how they interact with the facilitator, and which students are participating in discussion. I also examined how journaling helped students express ideas, make more detailed and less general comments and make relevant connections to their personal experiences. I used journaling to encourage students to participate more often in discussion in specific ways. I studied how journaling helped students address their questions in discussion to their peers instead of exclusively addressing their question to the teacher. I examined the ways journaling affected the frequency and quality of students' questions to one another and their responses to these questions. The ability to organize one's thoughts for expression is an important skill for students to develop, and through journaling I hoped to elicit awareness in students of the value of sharing the questions and inquiries they explored in their journals. The ability to verbally express one's ideas in a group setting is a tool for personal advocacy that students need to be successful in the global community.

Students were asked to journal once a week for five weeks. The journal prompts had two parts to them. The first prompt was used to orient students to the topic of writing through asking the students to recount something that happened in their own lives that related to the second prompt, which then asked students to relate their experience to the novel being studied in class. These prompts were

given at the same time and the first prompt was specifically written to ask the students to relate to the characters in the chapter. For instance, one character's father promised her a bicycle but then couldn't get it to her, which the character felt was unfair, so the prompt asked, "Tell about a time when something unfair happened to you." The students had between three and five minutes to respond to each prompt, during which I circulated and encouraged students to write for the entire time allotted. The majority of students wrote between three and five sentences for each prompt. There was one instance where the journal prompt was in response to an assembly that affected students powerfully, and I felt it was an appropriate time to allow them to express their thoughts in a journal, which was then followed by a discussion.

Participants and Setting

Whiterun Middle School is in a suburban neighborhood of a small city in western Washington with an estimated of 48,000 and a median income of \$57,000 per household. The student population of Whiterun Middle School is .01% American Indian/Alaskan native, 7.9% Asian American, 3% Native Hawaiian, 9.2% Pacific Islander, 3.8% African American, 11.7% Hispanic, 65.1% European American, and 9.4% mixed race. Of the students at Whiterun, 38.8% receive free or reduced lunch, while 14.3% of its students receive special education services and 2.3% have 504 plans and/or are transitional bilingual students. This study took place in a sixth-grade English Language Arts classroom of 23 students. I analyzed not only the whole group of sixth graders I taught, but individual students as well.

Data Collection

Four sources of data were chosen for their ability to capture what is needed for the study: students' journals, reflection notes, discussion videos with transcripts, and student surveys. In my student teaching, I hoped to set up the students in small groups for seating arrangements in order for the class to have a small group discussion focus as well as allowing the class as a whole to participate in discussion. I changed the plan to set up partners who would then turn to their neighboring partners to form groups of four when necessary. I emphasized discussion within the curriculum, engaging students in both small-group and large-group discussion. The curriculum pushed students to reflect on their thoughts and organize their ideas through journaling. I examined individual student's frequency of participation in discussion as well their comments in discussion. This included whether or not they related the discussion to their own experience, whether they stated that they agreed or disagreed with their peers' comments and if they gave textual evidence for their comments.

Reflection Notes

Throughout the study, I kept reflective field notes as I observed my classroom in order to externalize my initial thoughts and reactions. These reflections focused on what happened in the classroom on a daily basis and served as a record of my thoughts from day to day throughout the time the study. The reflections enabled me to examine bias, self-awareness and self-reflection during the study for reflexivity. These field notes also documented choices I made as a facilitator of discussion and how those might have affected discussion participation.

These field notes also served to record changes that occurred in my thought processes that informed certain choices I made in the classroom as well as in my curriculum. This was valuable because I was a first-year student teacher and I anticipated that there would be a need for flexibility in my planning and instruction.

Journals

Student journals were used to measure the thoughts that occurred when students were given the chance to respond individually and privately. The thoughts students chose to express in their journals were examined in order to see if students asked questions in their journals and whether they made connections with their experiences. The journals were also used as a tool to compare what students said in discussion with what they wrote in their journals. Journal prompts were crafted to elicit students' thoughts about discussion topics prior to the discussion. These journals provided a glimpse into how students constructed initial ideas in a low-risk journaling environment. Journal entries varied from lesson to lesson but always included one short writing for first impressions and general thoughts and then a specific guided question. These guided questions corresponded with the learning targets for that day as well as with the later topic of discussion based on the novel. These discussions involved the whole class, with students answering questions while I facilitated. The journals helped to shine light on the connections or disconnections between journaling and discussion. Through student surveys, I also hoped to capture student feelings on the usefulness of journals.

The journals were analyzed based upon what students included in their journals as well as what they included when they participated in discussion.

Journals were compared with discussion videos to see if students called upon their journals to organize thoughts for discussion. This comparison was supplemented by student surveys, which asked about students' opinions related to journals, discussions, and the connections between the two. Journals were coded with the following questions in mind: Did students draw upon thoughts from their journals in discussion? After the first journal entry, did students write about past discussions in their journals? What did students exclusively include in their journal and not in the discussion? Did students ask more questions in their journals and fewer in discussion? Did students go into more detail in their journal? Did students make more experiential connections in their journal than in discussion? What did the students say exclusively in discussion and not in their journals? These coding procedures will serve to focus the analysis of the journals.

Videos

Because I was the teacher-researcher, I wanted to observe my instructional actions as well as my students and their actions in discussion. As the facilitator of the discussion, in addition to my field notes I wanted another source of data that could serve as a way to observe student interactions. The videos enabled me as a researcher to notice which students were participating in discussion and which students were not, and how those two factors connected with students' journal entries. The videos served as a way for me to measure frequency in student participation and also changes in status during discussion. The videos allowed me to see which students were participating as well as which students were presenting discussion questions to their peers. Participation is when a student verbally shares

their ideas, raises questions to the group and to individuals involved in the discussion, and makes connections to their experience. Interaction with peers is important because of the social pressures that inevitably occur in discussions and the status that develops in discussions based upon who is participating and who is not. This was important for my research question because I wanted data on both the students who participated and those who did not. These videos also enabled me to see when students addressed their peers in discussion as well as when they addressed the teacher. Videos were also used as a way to document discussions in order to compare them to what students wrote in their journals. Coding was used to measure student engagement. The videos also served to document student participation, as the research question included attention to the connection between journaling and classroom participation in class discussions.

Analysis of the videos focused on noticing student's actions during discussion as instances of participation and interaction with their peers in discussion. Videos were transcribed to allow me to examine what students said, which students talked, and with what frequency. Analysis of student participation was used in conjunction with their journal content and length in order to see if there was a correlation between their abilities to participate in discussion and their ability to journal on the topics they discussed. Videos were coded using the following questions: What students participated? At what frequency did they participate? What students did not participate? When did students address each other? When did students address the teacher? These questions were then compared with what students wrote in their journals.

Student Surveys

Student surveys were administered at the beginning of the year, in the middle of the study, and at the end of the study in order to establish students' feelings about journal writing and class discussion. These three surveys, in the form of exit tickets, were administered at the end of the class for students to quickly give their opinion on the questions presented. The survey captured students' ideas and feelings about expressing their ideas in writing and expressing their ideas in discussion. These surveys also asked if students felt they could have said more in discussion. Surveys served as a supplementary data source outside of journals because they asked students' their feelings about journaling and discussions and about how students organized their thoughts for expression.

Student surveys asked students to express their feelings about discussion and journaling on a one-to-five scale (see Appendix A) and give short answer reasons for their choices. The surveys were given in the beginning, to provide baseline data, and again halfway through the study and at the end of the study, to check for changes. Surveys were given at this frequency to record any changes in students' feelings about discussion as they became more comfortable with discussion. These surveys also enabled me to identify the form of communication with which students felt most comfortable when asked to express their ideas. These forms of communication were either participation in discussion or writing in the journals. This allowed me to see what students' felt about their abilities, which I later compared with what students showed in the classroom as their strengths.

Limitations

I collected data over a time period of five weeks during my student teaching. Data triangulation was strengthened through the use of four different data sources. Students were given a chance to give feedback in their surveys, which allowed for inclusion of participant feedback. Participant feedback was strengthened by allowing students to reflect on their level of participation in discussions through a self-evaluation completed after discussions. These evaluations were not included in the data collection but provided students a chance to explain why they did not participate and to set goals for when and how they could participate in the future. Reflexivity was increased through the inclusion of field notes, so that self-reflection, bias, and predispositions could be addressed during the study and in analysis of data. Transferability was strengthened in that the focus of the study can be situated in a contextually different setting but the resulting data might be different than the data I collected based upon the group of students. The use of journals to enhance discussion could be used in a sixth-grade classroom again, but because of the variety of students and varying levels of ability in each group of students the results could be drastically different.

One limitation of this study is the lack of peer review and external auditing of my research and practice. As the data was being collected, there were times that my mentor teacher and I discussed the data, but this was done in an informal manner. Although the data collected in this study was examined by peers who were conducting other studies in order to aid in coding, the process of doing so was done

in a less formal matter and therefore, cannot be considered peer review. This study is transformative in that it focuses on how educators can help students to equitably participate using practices established in the classroom.

The credibility of this study was strengthened by the first three weeks that I spent with the participants in the study so that I could have a deeper understanding of the participants and the data produced by them. Teaching this group of students for three weeks prior to data collection allowed for a time period in which I could understand the students better, which allowed me to see the credibility of the research and data collected in later weeks. Because I taught these students for three weeks prior to collecting data, my interpretations of the data gathered through practice with these students will be transferable and have a more holistic interpretation of what is happening in the classroom. Teaching this group of students prior to the study also allowed me to understand the perspective of the students and helped me to better analyze the data they provided for the study.

Another limitation of this study was the extraneous variables of seating arrangements in the classroom and discussion topics. Students might have expressed feelings of disliking partner discussion on the surveys because they did not like their partner rather than their actual feelings about discussion. Students also could have participated in a discussion because of their interest in the topic and refrained from others because of their disinterest in the discussion topic. This did not come up as an issue during the study but was found to affect the data sources immensely in that students were affected by whom they were sitting with when it came to discussion and partner conversations.

Data Analysis

Journals

The data collected in the journals for this study was analyzed by looking at how students responded to the prompts, which asked them to write about something in their life and then answer a similar question pertaining to the novel from the unit. Each prompt was different by week but the same structure carried throughout: a question that asked students to think about their lives in the frame of a specific question and then a question that asked them to apply what they wrote to the novel. As I collected the data, I recorded what strategies and methods were used the most in the journals. I also compared journal entries with the findings from the student surveys in regard to how students felt about journaling.

Student Surveys

The three surveys were compared to the journal entries as well as the discussion videos in order to see how students felt about journaling and discussion as the study progressed over five weeks. In examining the surveys it was also clear that they measured if students felt that discussion and journaling was valuable, regardless of if the student enjoyed the process of discussion and journaling. The surveys were also analyzed to measure if students became more confident in their abilities to participate in class discussion as well as journaling for class.

Research Journal

This data set was compared with the discussion videos in order to see what I as the researcher noticed about discussions and students as well as what happened

in the discussion. The research journal has daily reflections, comments and questions that arose as the study progressed. The research journal also documented when seats were changed as well as when students were absent from discussions.

Discussion Videos

The discussion videos were coded using systems similar to those used for the journals. The videos were analyzed and findings were recorded based upon if students spoke in discussion, what they spoke about in discussion, if they built upon the ideas of their peers and if they related the topic of discussion to something in their own lives and shared it with the group. The videos were also compared with the survey results to see what students felt about discussion and whether or not they participated in discussion.

Coding and Memoing

With the above data gathered, I made visual representations of each data source and compared them with one another to begin the decoding process. My research journal served as a way to examine what questions I was asking and exploring throughout the study as I gathered my data. These questions were taken from my research journal and used as a framework for what I was noticing in the data as I started to code and memo. I started with the surveys, looking at what answers changed over the course of the study and then taking that information and examining which student changed their answers. I looked at individual student survey answers and documented what each student answered in each survey question. This was done so that I could then compare their answers on the survey with what they wrote in their journals and what they said in discussion videos. This

allowed me to look at when students began to participate more in discussion and what they felt about discussion through out the study.

In examining the discussion videos I compared students' answers on the surveys, largely to see if students who said that they didn't like discussions on their surveys participated in discussion. I compared the discussion videos to students' answers on the surveys that said they were confident in discussion and whether or not those students participated in discussion. I used the discussion videos to record what students were participating throughout the study, which students began to participate at a certain time in the study, and which students didn't participate at all in the discussions during the study. This informed my examination of the journals because it allowed me to see which students were more inclined to write in their journals rather than participate in discussion.

When examining the journals, I compared them to discussion videos and surveys to see if students who did not participate in discussion were more comfortable with writing in their journals. I compared the journals to surveys to see what students who said they enjoyed writing in their journals or that they felt that journaling helped them think more clearly wrote in their journals. This allowed me to make connections between journaling, discussion participation and students' feelings on journaling and discussion.

CHAPTER 3 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings

This section of my paper details my examination of the data I collected, the processes that I went through to come to conclusions about my students' learning, and the implications that those findings suggest I compared the four data sources to examine how journaling affected the students' ability to participate in discussion.

The findings I will detail are

- an overall increase in confidence in discussion, which occurred as the study went on and was shown through changes in the survey answers students gave as well as the amount of students that participated;
- students recognized journals as a useful strategy and recognized that journaling helped them think more clearly but they did not mark that they enjoyed journaling;
- the inclusion of anecdotes in journals showed that students used the journals to express text to self connections that they were not comfortable sharing in discussion but journals gave them a medium to explore these connections which then enriched their contributions to discussion;
- the use of extra structure in discussions gave students the ability to organize thoughts taken from journals in a way that could be articulated in a low risk way, i.e. making connections without divulging too much anecdotal experience in their discussion contributions.

These findings will be discussed in detail and will be supported with evidence from the data collected.

Increased Confidence in Discussion

With the implementation of journals, there was an overall increase in confidence in class discussions based upon findings in student journals and student surveys. Table 1 demonstrates the change that occurred in students who felt that discussions made them nervous. At the beginning of the study, 66% of students expressed that discussion made them feel nervous. By the end of the study, 29% of students felt that talking in front of their classmates made them feel nervous.

Table 1

Survey responses to the statement: Talking in front of people makes me really nervous (item 4 on the survey)

(n=23)	1 st Survey (9/10)	2 nd Survey (10/8)	3 rd Survey (10/29)
5-Absolutely	18%	17%	4%
4	14%	9%	4%
3-Sometimes	34%	22%	21%
2	13%	26%	37%
1-Never	21%	26%	34%

Table 2 demonstrates how students felt about what they had contributed to discussion. At the beginning of the study, 64% of students felt that they could have contributed more to discussion but at the end of the study, this decreased to 45%, which meant that 55% of the students in the class felt that they had contributed to the discussion. Table 3 demonstrates the feelings that students had around discussion and how they felt during discussions. In the first survey, 49% of students expressed that discussion made them feel annoyed or frustrated. By the end of the

study, however, this number shrunk to 31%, showing that students were beginning to feel more comfortable with discussion.

Table 2

Survey responses to the question: Do you ever feel like you wish you could've said more in class discussions? (item 5)

(n=23)	1 st Survey (9/10)	2 nd Survey (10/8)	3 rd Survey (10/29)
5-Absolutely	14%	8%	6%
4	13%	21%	18%
3-Sometimes	37%	21%	21%
2	19%	17%	21%
1-Never	17%	17%	21%

Table 3

Survey responses to the statement: Having class discussions makes me feel... (item 8)

(N=23)	1 st Survey	2 nd Survey	3 rd Survey
5-Excited	8%	17%	17%
4-Good	12%	26%	26%
3-Okay	31%	26%	26%
2-Annoyed	28%	17%	14%
1-Frustrated	21%	14%	17%

These three tables demonstrate the increase in confidence in students in many ways. Because there was an increase in students saying they did not feel nervous in discussion along with an increased confidence in how much they had contributed to discussion, the surveys show that students felt more comfortable in discussion by the end of the study. Many of the students who changed their answers

were students who had written extensively in their journals, which shows that the implementation of journals served as a way for students to organize their thoughts for discussion.

Out of the three discussion videos, there was an overall increase in the amount of students that spoke in discussion when I compared the three videos in chronological order. When comparing this data with the surveys, I noticed that students showed an increase in their ability to participate in discussion as well as their overall feelings of confidence in discussion. In the first video, 52% of students (12 out of the total 23) participated, the second video 56% of students participated (13 out of 23) and in the third video 70% of students participated (14 out of 20). Comparing these three videos shows a growth in whole class participation over the course of the study.

When analyzing student journals, I noticed that they showed a large amount of anecdotal evidence of understanding of the novel and relating life experiences to the experiences of the characters. These anecdotes did not turn up in discussion and were almost exclusively in journals. My expectation was to see students reading what they wrote aloud in discussion, but instead, students used discussion to refer to the text exclusively and give hypothetical situations rather than share their own experiences that they detailed in their journal entries. This difference in presented information lead to the finding that students are presenting new information after they journal rather than merely repeating what they are writing in their journal.

The surveys, student journals and student videos showed that there were a few students who did not vocally participate in discussion but then marked on their

surveys that they enjoyed discussions. This led me to believe that these students might not be as confident in their abilities to participate in discussion, but that they do feel that it is valuable and enjoy listening to the ideas of their peers. Although this finding was unexpected, it is worth mentioning as it showed that some students appreciated the opportunity to listen to their peers and not necessarily verbally participate in discussion.

Recognizing Useful Strategies

The implementation of journaling did give students a place to organize their thoughts before they participated in discussion. The data sources that led me to this idea were the journals, the surveys and my research journal. Many students would not write very much in their journals, or only wrote an in-depth entry for one of the prompts, but would answer that they felt that journaling helped them think more clearly on their surveys. In my research journal, while reading the journals after class, I wrote the following reflection.

It seemed like there wasn't very much difference between the personal anecdotes and the questions about *Seedfolks*. It seems like students are eager to write and give their feelings along with reasons for those feelings. I am wondering how they can go from explanation to exploration.

These students also responded through the survey in ways that said they did not enjoy journaling but felt that they could think more clearly after journaling. In Table 4, the class started out the year with 64% of students felt that journaling helped them to think more clearly about what they are learning. By the end of the study, 84% of students felt that writing in their journal helped them to think about what

they were learning. But in addition to this data, students expressed that they felt “Okay” about writing in journals. This is shown in Table 5, where at the beginning of the study, 79% of students felt between “okay” and “frustrated” about writing in journals, which did not change at the end of the study. So, although students recognized that writing in journals helped them to think more clearly about their learning, students felt, at best, “okay” about writing in journals.

Table 4

Survey responses to the statement: I think that writing in my journal helps me to think harder about what I am learning. (item 3)

(n=23)	1 st Survey (9/10)	2 nd Survey (10/8)	3 rd Survey (10/29)
5-Absolutely	13%	21%	31%
4	17%	21%	30%
3-Sometimes	34%	26%	23%
2	26%	26%	8%
1-Never	10%	6%	8%

Table 5

Survey responses to the statement: Writing in a journal for school makes me feel... (item 7)

(n=23)	1 st Survey	2 nd Survey	3 rd Survey
5-Happy	8%	11%	4%
4-Good	13%	34%	17%
3-Okay	65%	43%	46%
2-Annoyed	13%	14%	33%
1-Frustrated	1%	0%	0%

In analyzing the above data and taking into consideration my research question, I feel that students recognized journals as a place to express their feelings about the text but did not necessarily enjoy the process. Journals gave students a place to talk about personal connections with the text without being under the pressure of talking in front of a large group of people. By making these connections in the journals, students then could direct their attention to articulating what they wanted to say in discussion in a way that did not give away any of their emotional connections to the text. Students recognized that connecting to the text and sharing anecdotes that related to the story was something that they valued because it allowed for them to express their feelings without the pressure of performing in front of their peers in discussion. Students valued these emotional connections to the text but did not necessarily enjoy the process of writing them down.

Students did use journals as a place to express their feelings about the novel and share anecdotes that related to the topic. But when comparing these to the discussion videos, students use the phrases, “I feel” in their journals and “I think” in discussion. This leads to the idea that students are separating their feelings from their academic knowledge and opinions. An example of this occurs in the following transcriptions

Discussion

Student C: I think um, Sam is a seedfolk because um he um gave to the garden and he didn't think that way before the garden.

Journal Entry 10/7 (Student C)

Sam is a nice person. If I was in the garden and Sam came up and talked to me I would feel like hey this guy is being really nice and I wanna be nice now that someone has been nice to me. Sam would make me feel good about my day and make me wanna be a seedfolk.

This student separated her ideas about the novel with the word “think” in discussion and in her journal interacted with the text in a hypothetical fashion to share her feelings. In this way, students used the journals as a place to express their feelings about the novel and relate the novel to their experience, which is a strategy that is helpful in the English language arts. Through these findings it appeared that students had the ability to recognize journaling as a useful strategy because it allowed them a space to express their feelings and emotions that were tied to the text that they did not feel comfortable sharing in discussion. The implementation of journaling gave students a place to express feelings that they didn’t feel comfortable expressing in discussions

Anecdotes in Journals

The majority of students used their journals as a place to recount anecdotes from their lives that related to the novel. The first prompt of every journal write asked students to think about their lives and write something that reminded them of a feeling that the characters in the novel were feeling, which would push students to share anecdotal evidence. But students did not carry these stories over into discussion. Although there was an increase in confidence in discussion, as shown through the surveys, the journals were used exclusively for anecdotal thoughts

about the text that related the story to events and memories in the student's lives. This could be because of the high stakes nature of whole group discussion and the anxiety many students shared on their surveys about participating in discussions at the beginning of the study.

Comparing the journals with the discussion videos and surveys, many students wrote completely different things in their journal than what they talked about in discussion. One example of this is in the following transcript:

Discussion 9/24

STUDENT N: So kindness made people change in the story through Sae Young in that there was horrible things that people did in her life that made her not want to go outside and stuff but the garden helped her to see that good things are in the world if you learn to trust people. And then she changed her life by being more open and helping people.

Journal Entry 9/24 (Student N)

One time, there was this time that my mom helped me when school was really hard and she did my chores for me when I was working on a project. It was good.

I would feel good if I was in the garden and someone helped me.

The transcript included is the student's first comment in the discussion that was around the question, "How are people choosing kindness in the garden in the novel?" This student was the first student to speak in the discussion so this was not in response to someone else's comment but his first initial thoughts once discussion began. In the initial analysis for this finding, it was considered that students didn't

use their journals as a tool for discussion because their verbal contribution could have been in response to another student's comment, which might be farther away from the topic of discussion.

Students did not use the journal as a guide for discussion but when analyzing the surveys, the majority of students answered the question "I think that writing in my journal helps me to think harder about what I am learning" with a 4 (1 being never and 4 being in between sometimes and always) and the question "Do you feel like you can think more clearly after you write all your thoughts down?" with a 4 as well. This data added to the findings of discussion and the journals, which alluded to the students' feelings that the journals were useful for expressing personal connections and anecdotes that they might not have been comfortable with sharing in discussion.

Struggling Students Benefitting from Structure and Partners

Many students who did not feel comfortable participating in discussion wrote longer and more in-depth journal entries. These students were also the students who benefitted the most out of a more structured set up for discussions. Because these students often wrote longer journal entries, structure and partners would help these students to narrow down what they wanted to share in discussion based on the depth and amount of thinking they presented in their journals. These students spent a lot of time sharing anecdotes in their journals in order to relate their experiences to the novel. The third discussion video was of a discussion that asked students to write in their journals to two prompts (much like the previous videos) but then asked students to talk with their partner about what they wrote.

Then, students were asked to find textual evidence of what they wanted to talk about in the text with a partner, which would then be what they could present to the class for discussion. One student, Student O, had not participated at all previously in the study and expressed through the surveys that discussion made her extremely nervous (Student O answered 5-absolutely on all three surveys for the question, "Talking in front of the class makes me REALLY nervous"). This student said the following in the third discussion video,

Student O: Um, When I think of a seedfolk, I think it is someone that planted a seed because a seed planted can also be a baby and they will take care of it and they will love it and they um won't try to kill it and even if it's hard they will try to take care of it. And I know Maricella said, "I wish my baby would die" and so I thought that she changed her mind

Although this student's feelings of anxiety about discussion might not have changed, it seemed that the added structure and specific topic for discussion allowed for her to participate in a way that she felt comfortable. This student also indicated that she enjoyed partner work, (on the question, "When I work with a partner I feel" Student O answered a 4 on the 1-5 scale consistently on all three surveys) and because she was allowed to work with a partner in coming up with what she wanted to contribute, she might have felt more comfortable with what she was sharing. The conversation the two students had might have helped her to organize her thoughts she explored in her journal into something she felt comfortable presenting to her peers. Student O wrote in her journal the previous day and wrote an entire page relating to the question that was then posed during the discussion cited above. This

student consistently wrote longer entries and talked less in discussion. Student O did write about a similar topic in her journal but she wrote more about her own experiences rather than referring to the text.

One time, when I was little, my mom and I found a dog that was really sick and we parked and fed it some food. We were trying to decide to bring it home and then my mom said I think that we should find a home for this dog. So then we kept it at our house and put an ad on craigslist to get people to take it home and we waited and waited for someone else to take it home but no one called. So then my mom talked to our landlord and asked if we could keep the dog and she said that the landlord would think about it so we had to wait and wait and wait again. The whole time I was falling in love with the dog and she was so cute and so nice and she didn't even get into the garbage or anything. We bought dog food and everything and I thought that maybe once we bought a bed I would know that she was going to stay. And then my mom came home with a dog bed and said that we could keep her. I think that my mom chose kindness to keep the dog and to take it home in the first place. I think that we chose kindness and kept my dog (her name is Maggie).

Although this story is different in the details given but it is the same concept as the chapter that this student referenced. Although she did not talk about this entry in class, she did share a similar concept in discussion when she had structured support and the opportunity to work with a partner. Through the added structure and partner work, this student was able to feel comfortable with participating in

discussion by referring to her journaling in a way that did not divulge any personal information about her connections with the text.

Implications

Through data analysis and examination, this study has played a huge role in the informing of my teaching in the secondary English language arts classroom. There are many ideas and teaching strategies that have emerged from the findings of this study. The implications that were most relevant were the need for practice in discussion, encouraging students to share their anecdotal evidence in discussion, encouraging students to use journals as a place to connect with the text and the need for added structure in order to scaffold discussion.

Discussion is a high-risk activity that many students find hard to acclimate to when they are asked to participate when they have not had any experience with whole group discussion. Through looking at the findings from the surveys, journals and discussion, it showed that students benefitted from having time to practice and refine their discussion skills through a frequent implementation of discussions. The more time students have in whole group discussion, the greater their confidence will be in discussion. Students' confidence in discussion increased as the study progressed, which shows that students felt more comfortable with discussion as they experienced more discussions. This gives students a chance to practice forming ideas for verbal discussion while they are simultaneously listening to the ideas of their peers in whole class discussion.

Journaling provided students with a place to share their emotional feelings about the text as well as things they had in common with the people in the story.

The journals from this study gave students a place to express their feelings about situations in the novel as well as a place for them to put themselves in the shoes of the characters in the novel. Students used journals as a space to test out hypothetical situations that related to the novel and allowed them to share their feelings about these explorations. These explorations might not have been something that could have been shared in discussion in a smooth and fluid way, so using journals as a forum for students to try out these hypothetical situations is useful.

Discussion is a place that allows students not only to cite textual evidence, but also to relate the text to their lives and experiences. Students exclusively shared anecdotal evidence that related to the text in their journals, when they could share these ideas with their fellow students. Giving students the chance to share their anecdotal evidence in discussion with their peers allows them to connect to the text in a personal way both as individuals and as a group of students. If as the teacher, one can make it explicit that it is okay to share anecdotal connections with the book, students would be more inclined to share their ideas and anecdotes with their classmates in whole group discussion.

There were many students in the beginning of this study that felt extremely uncomfortable when asked to participate in class discussions. These students benefitted greatly from being given added structure to their participation expectations. This included giving students a task to complete to prepare for the discussion, including working with partners. Giving students a chance to work with a partner on a specific preparation task allows students to test ideas they might

want to share with the whole group out in a low risk situation. This then implies that the implementation of added structure to preparation for discussion will help students to focus on the task that needs to be completed rather than the anxieties surrounding discussion. Giving students a set of instructions that asks them to find text that they will refer to during discussion is one way that structure can be added to discussion.

Students benefit from having journal entries that are connected to discussions they will have as a whole group. Journals allow students to explore their feelings around a text without having to share it with their peers. Giving students a chance to share their ideas with partners as well as in journals is an effective way to set up students for success in a whole group discussion. Giving students the chance to express their thoughts about a text in their journal allows them to express their emotional connection to the text in a protective and safe medium.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY

1. I like to express my ideas by writing them down...

5	4	3	2	1
Absolutely!		Sometimes		Never

2. I like to express my ideas by talking about them....

5	4	3	2	1
Absolutely		Sometimes		Never

3. I think that writing in my journal helps me to think harder about what I am learning

5	4	3	2	1
Absolutely		Sometimes		Never

4. Talking in front of the class makes me REALLY nervous

5	4	3	2	1
Absolutely		Sometimes		Never

5. Do you ever feel like you wish you could've said more in class discussions?

5	4	3	2	1
Absolutely		Sometimes		Never

6. Do you ever feel like you can think more clearly after you write all your thoughts down?

5	4	3	2	1
Absolutely		Sometimes		Never

7. Writing in a journal for school makes me feel...

5- Happy!

4- Good! It was cool!

3-Okay I finished it for class.

2- Annoyed...

1-Frustrated.

8. Having class discussions makes me feel...

5- Excited! I love talking about my ideas with my classmates!

4- Good!

3-Okay. I feel like the discussion is valuable

2-Annoyed....

1- Frustrated

9. When I express my ideas by writing I feel....

5-Excellent.

4-Good.

3-Okay.

2-Annoyed.

1-Frustrated.

10. When I talk about my ideas with a partner I feel....

5-Excellent.

4-Good.

3-Okay.

2-Annoyed.

1-Frustrated