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Background knowledge conversations about informational text

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BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT INFORMATIONAL TEXT

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my students. Your willingness to participate in this project made this work possible. Thank you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my family, friends, coworkers, administrators, and my fellow MA candidates for their support during this process.

Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to discover what happened when students are given opportunities to discuss their background knowledge before reading an informational text and to discuss how their background knowledge changed and grew after reading the text. The specific aim of this project was to find out how students interacted with each other during these structured and scaffolded conversations. Transcripts of student conversations, student artifacts, observations of conversations, and a teacher research journal were analyzed. The group of students studied demonstrated the ability to learn from each other, expand on each other's comments, and address misconceptions. The implications for teaching literacy in a 3rd and 4th grade classroom are discussed.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents (Continued)

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

My students were seated in a row in front the Smart Board, enthralled in the projected informational text about arctic foxes. As I was completing the read aloud, the students began to call out their thoughts.

"I know what their babies are called! Pups!" exclaimed one student.

"I think they have white fur so they can camouflage with the snow," a second student later explained.

As I continued reading, students vocally expressed their surprise and new learning. After reading about the arctic temperatures that can reach -40°F, a student wondered aloud, "What? They can live where it's that cold?"

"Oh, so that's how they keep warm!" one student declared after we read that the foxes can wrap their tails around their necks like scarves to keep warm when lying down.

As a new elementary school teacher beginning to fulfill the dual role of teacher-researcher, this experience sparked my interest in exploring how students discuss their background knowledge and understanding of informational text. I wanted to discover new ways to keep my students engaged in literacy learning throughout their elementary years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to discover what would happen when students were given opportunities to discuss their background knowledge before reading an informational text and to discuss how their background knowledge changed and grew after reading the text. To begin, I revisited the work of Debbie Miller (2012) in her book

Reading with Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades. I read about the ways in which elementary aged students could conceptualize and discuss schema. I connected with the way Miller (2012) made the internal process of activating and confirming schema concrete and visual by comparing schema to a file folder that stores information. Miller's clear description of her lesson that demonstrated how to add, delete, or keep information in a mental file gave me the confidence that my students would also be able to understand this complex concept.

Next, I began reviewing the literature about the role of background knowledge, I found significant research about this topic was from the 1970s through 1990s. During that time, researchers were mainly trying to determine how a student's amount of background knowledge affects his or her comprehension (Pearson, Hansen, & Gordon, 1979; Recht & Leslie, 1988). After reviewing the historical foundations of research on how background knowledge benefits comprehension, I explored more contemporary studies. I found that current researchers are investigating other areas of literacy, such as oral reading accuracy and fluency, which can be affected by background knowledge (Priebe, Keenan, & Miller, 2012).

One specific aim of this study was to find out what exactly students would do during these focused conversations with their peers. My study was significant because although the benefits of background knowledge and student discussions have been well documented through scholarly research, there were not studies combining the two areas. In addition, my research question was important in my classroom and school because it addressed the needs of a specific population of students who have trouble accessing the general education curriculum because of language learning difficulties. When I began

teaching at the elementary level during the previous school year, I noticed that my students had a hard time participating in conversations with their peers about content due to weaknesses in expressive and receptive language. I was interested in studying if my students could find success with classroom discussions if the conversations were structured with clearly defined student roles and if they were provided with scaffolding. In this area, I began examining research studies about the benefits of classroom discussions. Through this research, I became aware that conversations about text can be beneficial for students in elementary school. Young students are able to participate in conversations with their peers by adding questions, making connections, and building upon each other's comments (McGee & Parra, 2015; Moses, Ogden, & Beth Kelly, 2015). Since I knew my students would need support from me to be successful during group discussions, I also found that teachers can scaffold conversations by reminding students of their roles and responsibilities and by giving feedback about the accuracy of students' statements (Jordan & Massad, 2014).

Another aim of this research was to explore an instructional practice that could aid my students' comprehension of informational text. I felt there was need to investigate a strategy for informational text comprehension due to the changes in demands for students in the 21st century. I began research in this area by looking into the realities of the use of informational text in the elementary school classroom (Jeong, Gaffney, & Choi, 2010). Although instructional time devoted to informational text was found to be minimal in the previous study, researchers have found that primary aged students do benefit from instruction focused on informational text and that strategies typically used

for narrative text can adapted effectively for use with expository text (Barone & Barone, 2016).

Statement of Research Problem and Question

The purpose of this study was to discover what happened when students were given the opportunity to discuss their background knowledge before reading a text and discuss how their background knowledge changed and grew after reading a text. One specific aim of this project was to find out how students interacted with each other during these structured and scaffolded conversations. In addition, another aim was to find out how students' understanding of a topic changes due to reading a text and having a conversation with their peers. Will students agree or disagree with each other's background knowledge? How will the students communicate with each other about their background knowledge? Will the conversations help students address misconceptions and grow their knowledge base about a topic? What can I do to scaffold the conversations to support the needs to students with language learning difficulties?

Story of the Question

My question was created due to a change in my teaching position and an overall need found among students in the district. After teaching English Language Arts (ELA) at the middle school level for eight years, I was transferred to the district's elementary school during the 2016-2017 school year to teach the elementary level resource room ELA classes. My position was changed to the elementary level due in part to the fact that I am a certified Orton Gillingham teacher and because I was pursuing a master's degree as a Reading Specialist. This challenge of teaching at new grade levels, while having

knowledge of the demands students face when they enter middle school, allowed me to craft a unique question.

To begin, I thought about the skills that my students would need to be successful as they progress through the grade levels. Many of my students expressed excitement about reading informational text. My third grade students were especially motivated to learn about animals and nature through informational text. At the same time, I knew they would need to be taught specific comprehension strategies for this type of text. I was also aware that my students would be required to read an increasing amount informational text in social studies, science, and health classes as they moved up through the grades. How many times did the Physical Education/Health teacher at the middle school come to me to express frustration about many students' understandings of what they read in the Health textbook? How many times did I work with students at lunch to help them reread the required chapters in a science textbook? I knew this was an area I wanted to address with students to help build their skills and confidence.

I also had a strong understanding of my third and fourth grade students' strengths and weaknesses because I taught all of them during the previous school year. The speech language-pathologist and I had collaborated on lessons to help students improve their social interactions and learning through class discussions. I was aware some of the students found participating in group conversations difficult because of weaknesses with working memory. How can I support students in both listening to what their peers say and holding onto what they want to share in their mind at the same time? What instructional strategies will assist students with expressive language difficulties?

Additionally, I knew from team meetings that some students had trouble participating in general education classes during class discussions. Teachers and classroom aides had explained that some students would only join in on conversations if prompted. What strategies could I work on in the resource room to better prepare students to be able to contribute to whole group discussions the general education classroom? The above questions lead me to creating this study.

I also started to consider the goals of the elementary school as a whole. During the 2016-2017 school year, a group of teachers, reading specialists, and administrators formed a committee to revamp the school's summer assignments. It was decided that the students needed opportunities to grow their background knowledge through experiences and reading during the summer break. The committee designed summer activities in order to address a lack of background knowledge that they believed was affecting the students' reading comprehension. Each academic department devised activities that the students could complete over the summer to expand their schema about that content area. I agreed with my coworkers about the importance of background knowledge, and I wanted to find out how students could use their existing schema to help them understand things that they read.

Likewise, I understood the importance of background knowledge in the age of the Common Core State Standards. Specifically, the designers of the common core emphasize that students need opportunities to build knowledge through reading in order to become successful readers (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Additionally, when the state of New Jersey revised the Student Learning Standards in 2016, the ELA standards were updated

to reflect the critical role background knowledge plays in reading comprehension. The combination of the three areas explained above lead to the creation of my research question: What happens when 3rd and 4th grade students with language learning difficulties participate in a structured conversation about background knowledge before and after reading informational text?

Organization

The remainder of this teacher research study is organized into four chapters. Chapter Two is a review of the literature in the following three key areas explored in this study: background knowledge, student conversations about text, and informational text. Next, Chapter Three explains the context of the study including descriptions of the community, school, classroom, and background information about the students who participated in the research. Following that, Chapter Four reviews and analyzes the data that was collected through observations, audio-recordings, student artifacts, and interviews. Finally, Chapter Five gives a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn from the study, the limitations of this teacher research, and the implications for the field of education.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Classroom discussions are a common practice employed to help students with literacy learning. Teachers often promote student social interactions via group discussions to further the development of knowledge about a variety of topics. The activation of student background knowledge is another strategy frequently used by educators to support the understanding of text. Both of these widely accepted methods of instruction have been well researched; however, the benefits of the combination of the two strategies has not been represented in teacher research. This study attempts to determine the effects of student discussions about background knowledge before and after reading informational text. Chapter two of this research project provides a review of literature in three areas connected in this study. First, the benefits of activating background knowledge on many aspects of reading are discussed. The next section examines literature focused on the value of classroom discussions about text. Finally, since informational text was utilized in this study, the last section of this chapter explores literature about how students interact with informational text. The chapter concludes with a summary of the three areas of literature and how this study may expand teachers' knowledge about the effects of activating and discussing prior knowledge.

Background Knowledge

Theorists have emphasized the importance of background knowledge on reading and learning. Schema Theory contends that a student with more background knowledge about a topic will more easily learn new information about that topic than a student with

limited schema, and a student's knowledge is always changing and expanding as reading and learning occur (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Furthermore, Tracey and Morrow (2012) explained that Socio-Cultural Theorists understand the importance of valuing children's "funds of knowledge" and using the information that students know from their own life experiences to increase literacy learning (p. 125).

Research from the last four decades has confirmed these understandings. In the 1970s and 1980s, empirical studies focused on how background knowledge affected students' reading comprehension and recall of text (Recht & Leslie, 1988). During the last decade, research has shifted to focus on the role background knowledge plays in the reading comprehension of specific populations of students such as students learning English as a second language.

The literature about the effects background knowledge on reading goes beyond comprehension. For example, Priebe, Keenan, and Miller (2012) examined how prior knowledge of a topic affected oral reading fluency and word identification in a quantitative study. The fourth grade students who participated in this study read a text from the *Qualitative Reading Inventory* about Amelia Earhart. After the students answered the background knowledge questions and read the text aloud, the researchers analyzed their miscues. Priebe et al. (2012) found that students classified as poor readers with prior knowledge "read the passage more fluently and made fewer errors than poor readers without prior knowledge" (p. 144). Specifically, the poor readers with background knowledge were able to use semantic information to identify words more so than students lacking background knowledge (Priebe et al., 2012).

Next, a study completed by Kostons and van der Werf (2015) differed from most other studies about the effects of activating background knowledge because they looked at the impact of both prior topic knowledge activation and prior metacognitive knowledge activation on text comprehension rather than just looking at the effects of prior topic knowledge activation on comprehension. The results of this study indicated that activating prior metacognitive knowledge "leads to enhanced performance scores on text comprehension" (Kostons & van der Werf, 2015, p. 272). This is an important finding for this research study because students activated their topic knowledge and metacognitive knowledge about how to use the strategy of confirming and refuting background knowledge. Overall, the findings of the studies discussed above demonstrate that students' prior knowledge impacts many areas of literacy.

When reviewing the literature about the relationship between background knowledge and literacy skills, it is important to consider the role of students' funds of knowledge that come from their cultural backgrounds. In a quantitative study, Garth-McCullough (2008) examined "the effects of cultural orientation of texts, prior achievement, and prior knowledge on the students' reading comprehension performance" (p. 15). This findings from this study revealed that culturally bound prior knowledge supports reading comprehension. Specifically, "students with a large amount of prior knowledge of their own culture performed well on each of the reading comprehension measures" (Garth-McCullough, 2008, p. 17). In fact, students who were knowledgeable about their own culture's "values, history, expressions, and practices" were able to use these understandings to better comprehend texts from other cultural contexts (Garth-McCullough, 2008, p. 17). It is clear from the literature that a student's background

knowledge influences his or her text comprehension and fluency and that activating a student's background knowledge is a frequently used instructional strategy. This study attempts to link the activation of background knowledge with another well-known instructional practice, classroom discussions.

Student Conversations about Text

Student centered discussions about text have been widely utilized in the classroom to increase student engagement and achievement. The importance of the social interactions that happen during classroom discussions has been theorized and studied for many decades. For example, Vygotsky asserted that children's cognitive development depends on their interactions with others (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Furthermore, in a quantitative study Block, Parris, Reed, Whiteley, and Cleveland (2009) found that second through sixth grade students were more successful at completing summaries and retaining information about a text when using a transactional learning approach, in which students participated in a conversation with their peers and teacher about a text, than when five other instructional approaches were used.

Many studies since 2010 have emphasized that primary aged students can benefit from group discussions about text. First, Moses, Ogden, and Beth Kelly (2015) shared their experiences teaching first grade students how to participate in conversations about text. The students were taught to come prepared to a discussion group and participate with their peers by adding questions, connections, or comments to the discussions. During whole group discussions, students "interacted, questioned the text, had polite disagreements, built on each other's arguments, and used textual evidence to convince their friends" (Moses et al., 2015, p. 237). Furthermore, McGee and Parra (2015) worked

with second grade students as they participated in grand conversations about nonfiction and fiction picture books. The authors discovered that the conversations allowed students to "make deeper connections to the story, their personal lives, and the outside world" (McGee & Parra, 2015, p. 8). Moreover, the students gained confidence within their learning community (McGee & Parra, 2015). These findings show that class discussions have positive effects on the text comprehension of students of all ages.

Other recent studies about classroom conversation have focused on how teachers can best facilitate and scaffold student conversations. For example, Jordan and Massad (2014) completed a qualitative study in which they examined how a third grade teacher supported students' peer interactions during conversations about newspaper articles. The researchers found that the teacher moderated the discussions by reminding students of their roles and responsibilities and guiding the direction of the conversation (Jordan & Massad, 2014). In addition, the teacher supplied relevant knowledge that the students needed to understand the text, interpreted complex content, and provided feedback about student's accuracy and validity (Jordan & Massad, 2014). This study is noteworthy because the authors explained that it is doubtful that students could have achieved success during classroom discussion without without "significant teacher scaffolding" (Jordan & Massad, 2014, p. 19).

In a similar quantitative study, Dwyer, Kelcey, Berebitsky, and Carlisle (2016) investigated the "discourse moves" used by second and third grade teachers to "foster effective discussions about text" (p. 286). The study revealed that the teachers' most commonly used discourse move was activating and having their students share topical knowledge. In addition, Dwyer et al. (2016) noted that "implementation of the discourse

moves in SSLT was associated with higher levels of student reading comprehension and vocabulary" (p. 305).

The findings from these two studies are significant for this teacher research study because the students participated in structured conversations with teacher scaffolding. According to the literature, discussions are an effective classroom practice that can improve students' retention of information, deepen the connections students make, and can lead to increased student confidence within the classroom community. However, the most recent studies have added to educator's understanding of how to best facilitate this practice. It was found that scaffolding and moderating of the discusion is essential for student success with converations.

Informational Text

Scholarly literature about the use of informational text in the elementary classroom is included in this chapter due to the fact that expository text was solely used in this study. It is now widely accepted that elementary aged students must receive instruction focused on informational text in order to be prepared for life in the 21st century (Jeong, Gaffney, & Choi, 2010). In the past decade, instruction focused on informational text has increased due to demands placed on students with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards in many US states. In addition, many educators have started to recognize the value of informational text instruction in preparing students to make the shift from learning to read to reading to learn around fourth grade. Despite these changes in demands, Jeong, Gaffney, and Choi (2010) found that in third grade, 42% of time was spent on narrative text and 32% of the time was spent on informational text activities. This trend was similar in fourth grade classrooms, with 46% of the time

focused on narrative text and 32% of the time was devoted to informational text. Although these findings show that there is somewhat of a balance between activities focused on narrative and informational text in the third and fourth grades, the researchers noted that the actual amount of time spent on informational text was still very small in all grades. Although this study revealed the need for more instructional time to be devoted to informational text in the elementary classroom, there have been a variety of research studies about how the text is used.

In a qualitative study, Filipenko (2004) studied how preschool aged children interacted with informational text. The author of this study explained that children had plenty of opportunities to interact with narrative text in the classroom but had "little to no classroom experience" with informational texts (Filipenko, 2004, p. 23). Through analysis of children's talk about informational text, Filipenko (2004) found that students recognized and used text features, activated schema, developed knowledge, connected with personal experiences, and participated in classroom communities centered around informational text. Therefore, Filipenko (2004) argued that informational text should be included in instruction in the preschool classroom. This study has implications for primary aged students as well, because it showed that young children can understand and engage with informational text in meaningful ways.

Since the previous study, more research and instructional time in the classroom has been devoted to informational text. Kuhn, Rausch, McCarty, Montgomery, and Rule (2017) completed a quantitative study of the "impact of explicitly teaching reading comprehension and vocabulary strategies with nonfiction text compared to fiction text in primary-grade classrooms" (p. 285). The researchers looked at first and second grade

students' attitudes towards reading, vocabulary development, and use of strategies to determine important information, use schema, and visualize after instruction focusing on nonfiction and fiction text. Kuhn et al. (2017) found that the use of nonfiction text in the primary grades lead to increased student engagement, reading comprehension, and vocabulary achievement. These findings are significant in the new Common Core era, which requires 50 percent of the texts in the classroom to be nonfiction.

Teachers are now investigating what happens when informational text is studied by students in literature circles, a structure that was previously used only for fiction. Barone and Barone (2016) completed a qualitative study about how fifth grade students interacted with informational text during literature circles. The researchers revamped the traditional literature circle roles that were designed for fiction text to better work with nonfiction text. They found that students in the "director's" role created questions at various levels of complexity, students in the "inventor" role were able to create new text features, "mappers" used graphic organizers to share information from the text, "word wizards" defined words and connected them to the readings, students in the role of the "visual viewer" created scientific sketches from visualizations (Barone & Barone, 2016). Overall, the authors concluded that the nonfiction literature circles lead to student success in acquiring knowledge and vocabulary, supporting responses with textual evidence, and in participating in close readings of text (Barone & Barone, 2016). This study is important in showing what students can gain from studying informational text and that students are able to participate in social learning experiences with informational text.

Conclusion

Studies showing the positive benefits of activating and having strong background knowledge, student conversations about text, and instruction in informational text have been prominent in literature about reading education. The activation and amount of background knowledge a student has can affect comprehension, recall, and fluency (Garth-McCullough, 2008; Kostons & van der Werf, 2015; Priebe et al., 2012). Discussions about text can aid retention, connections, and help students grow their own confidence (Block et al., 2009; McGee & Parra, 2015). Scaffolding provided by the teacher during class conversations is essential for students to achieve success (Dwyer et al., 2016; Jordan & Massad, 2014). Finally, elementary aged students can interact with informational text in meaningful ways and use this type of text to gain content and vocabulary knowledge (Barone & Barone, 2016; Filipenko, 2004; Kuhn et al., 2017). Despite the large amount of research in each key area, the intersection of these practices has not been studied. Therefore, this study has the goal of discovering what happens when students discuss their background knowledge before and after reading a text. By linking activating background knowledge and scaffolded discussion, this study aims to add to the knowledge base of best practices for elementary aged students.

Chapter 3

Context of Study

Community

This teacher research study took place in a suburban town in southern New Jersey. The town covered an area of about 1.6 square miles. According to the 2010 United State Census, the total population of the town was 3,739, the number of households was 1,472, and the number of families was 1,039. In 2010, the racial makeup of the town was 95.9% White, 1.8% African American, 1.5% from two or more races, 0.4% Asian, 0.3% from some other race, and 0.1% Native American. Also, 2% of the population was Hispanic or Latino (of any race). According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the median household income in the town was $64,478. In addition, 7.9% of the population had incomes below the poverty level.

The school district in which the study took place served students in pre-kindergarten to eighth grade. Students attended a regional school district for high school. The pre-kindergarten program was for children with disabilities. There were two school buildings within the district. The elementary school served students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The middle school housed students in grades 6 through 8. There were 439 students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 8 during the 2016-2017 school year. About 38% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. In the whole district, 30.93% of the students were classified as special education students.

School

The study site was the district's elementary school. During the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 289 students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 5 at the

school. Considering the racial and ethnic groupings within school building, 79.2% of the students were white, 7.6% were from two or more races, 7.2% of the students were Hispanic, 4.8% of the students were African American, and 1% of the students were Asian. The school employed 34 full time certificated staff members including teachers, guidance counselors, reading specialists, and speech-language pathologists.

The results of the 2016-2017 PARCC assessment for students in grades 3 through 5 are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

PARCC Assessment Results

2016-2017 PARCC Assessment Results						
	Did not yet meet expectations	Partially met expectations	Approached expectations	Met expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Percentage of students in NJ who met expectations
Grade 3	4%	16%	34%	38%	4%	43%
Grade 4	4%	18%	33%	39%	6%	41%
Grade 5	4%	8%	21%	54%	13%	48%

In the Spring of 2017, the special education teachers and administrators created a mission statement for the department. This mission statement expresses the department's commitment to providing high-quality educational support services for students with disabilities. To support the mission, the department aimed to identify the strengths of

each student, teach students to self-advocate, utilize high quality educational practices that are research based and data driven, and work cooperatively with families and the community to promote student success.

Classroom

Figure 1. Photograph of classroom.

The study took place in a resource room English-Language Arts for students in grades 3 and 4. There were eight students in the class and one instructional aide. I fulfilled the dual role of the teacher-researcher in this classroom.

After attending West Chester University of Pennsylvania and earning certifications in Elementary Education and Special Education, I was employed as a Special Education teacher at the district's middle school for eight years. I taught the self-contained class and resource room English Language Arts for students in fifth through

eighth grade. During that time, I became an Orton Gillingham certified teacher through Fairleigh Dickinson University. At the start of the 2016-2017 academic year, my teaching position was moved to the district's elementary school. For the past two years, I have taught resource room English Language Arts for students in first through fifth grade.

Students in this study attended English-Language Arts class for about 80 minutes each day. During a typical literacy block, students moved between three different centers in groups of two or three. Generally, students participated in Orton Gillingham lessons, comprehension and fluency lessons, and writing lessons with the special education teacher for 30 minutes a day. Then, students worked with the instructional aide on sight words, grammar skills, and writing prompts for an additional 30 minutes a day. Additionally, a reading specialist worked with groups of students a few times a week. Finally, students spent about 20 minutes a day completing independent review work on computers.

The classroom was divided into sections using small, moveable walls. Anchor charts, posters with mnemonic devices, posters with examples of syllable types, and a word wall were displayed throughout the classroom. There were two tables for group work, a teacher work station, individual students desks, shelves full of resources, a reading corner, and a quiet space for students to work individually in the classroom. The classroom library featured leveled readers, novels, and various types of informational text.

The classroom was well equipped with technology. There was a SmartBoard, iPads for student use, and each student had a school-issued Chromebook. Students had access to a variety of subscription-based apps to support their learning including Learning

Ally, IXL, Reading Eggs, and Kids A-Z. The students utilized Google Docs to type writing assignments, share work with the teacher, and collaborate on writing projects. In addition, students used Google Classroom to interact with their teacher and classmates online.

Students

Eight students were enrolled in the resource room English-Language Arts class and volunteered to be included in this study. All of these students had been placed in the resource room setting for English-Language Arts class in previous years. Placement decisions were made collaboratively between the students' parents/guardians, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, and a case-manager from the Child Study Team each year. The student's strengths and weaknesses were used to help determine the appropriate placement for instruction. Moreover, all of the students were placed in my resource room English-Language Arts class last year as well. However, during the previous school year these students were not in class at the same time.

In this study, five of the eight students were in 3rd grade and three students were in 4th grade. At the start of this study, four of the students were eight years old, three students were nine years old, and one student was 10 years old. The class includes seven boys and one girl. In terms of special education classifications, three of the students were classified as Communication Impaired. Three students received special education services due to classifications of Specific Learning Disability. One student had the classification of Other Health Impairment, and the last student had the classification of Multiply Disabled. In addition, five out of the eight students received speech and language therapy. All students answered questions about their attitudes toward

recreational and academic reading on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Selected answers from the survey are included in Appendix A.

Mark was a fourth grade student who described himself as a "kind of good reader" because "some words are hard." During an interview, Mark explained that some words are easy for him to read but reading is hard when he tries not to "read like robot." He enjoyed reading *Buzz Boy and Fly Guy*, books in the *Big Nate* serious, books about the movie Toy Story, and informational texts about the ocean. When given the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Mark's answered revealed that he had a slightly positive attitude about reading.

Another fourth grade student, Joey liked to read about hunting, fishing, car racing, and Bigfoot. He explained that he liked to read books that could teach him information about how to hunt and fish. He described himself as a "not good reader" because he believed reading is harder for him than it is for most other kids. He said the easiest part about reading was looking at the pictures and the hardest part was "reading the full pages with all those words." Joey's answers on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey revealed that he had a very negative attitude about reading. His answers put him in the 0 percentile for his grade level for attitude about recreational and academic reading. When asked how a teacher could make reading more fun or enjoyable, Joey responded "by letting us listen to a book" rather than reading it themselves.

Calvin is a 3rd grade student. He described himself as a "fast and good" reader and explained that he enjoyed reading humorous graphic novels like *Dogman, Captain Underpants,* and *Chasing Herobrine.* At home, Calvin spent time reading graphic novels and short stories on Xbox games that "start like a trailer." At school, Calvin liked reading

about wolves on the RAZ-Kids App. Calvin's total raw score on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was 46 out of 80. This placed him at the 15th percentile for his grade. In an interview, Calvin said that a teacher could make reading more fun by sharing books with funny pictures and words.

Another third grade student, Luke, said that he was a "good reader" because he liked to read a lot. He enjoyed reading books about dinosaurs, Batman, and sharks. Luke explained that he finds books to read by searching on Learning Ally and going to the library. In contrast to his interview responses, Luke's attitude about reading was mildly negative according to his answers on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. Luke said that teachers could make reading more enjoyable by putting funny words in books. He believed that learning to be a good reader was important because "if you are signing a peace treaty you have to be a good reader to read it."

Finally, Noah was in third grade at the time of this study. He explained that he was a "student" reader because he was not "positive" about his reading yet. He said that reading was hard because it is difficult to remember "stuff from the book." Noah liked to read about parrots, hamsters, jellyfish, dogs that help blind people, and the Titanic. Noah's answers on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey revealed that he had a negative attitude toward reading. Specially, he answered the very upset Garfield on 70% of all questions. When I asked Noah what teachers could do to make reading more fun or enjoyable he said "give us funny books" and "give us more time to read on websites."

Research Design/Methodology

Teacher research is created based on everyday experiences in the classroom. Shagoury and Power (2012) asserted that teacher research gives educators opportunities

to solve problems in their own classrooms, create the best environments for learning, understand students, and improve teaching in concrete ways. Moreover, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) explained that teacher research allows practitioners to examine their own assumptions about teaching and learning and develop "local knowledge" that applies to their own classrooms (p. 40). Furthermore, teacher research can be used to "ensure educational opportunity, access, and equity for all students" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 40). That being the case, this research study investigated ways in which a practitioner can create an environment that values student input and provides students opportunities for interactions. Therefore, this teacher inquiry met the qualifications of a qualitative teacher research study. The question this research study attempted to answer was "What happens when 3rd and 4th grade students with language learning difficulties participate in a structured conversation about background knowledge before and after reading informational text?"

Procedure of Study

This qualitative teacher research study examined what happened when students engaged in conversations about their schema before and after reading. After teaching these students in my resource room English-Language Arts last year and discussing their progress and participation in general education classes with other teachers, questions emerged about how students can learn to discuss text and their understandings with their peers. Data was collected through observation of student conversations, audio-recordings of conversations, interviews with students, and collections of student artifacts. All of the strategies used to collect data support qualitative inquiry.

My study took place over three weeks. During that time, students participated in eight conversations about background knowledge. Four of the conversations took place before reading a text, and the remaining four conversations occurred after reading the text. For this study, students read two science based texts and two social studies based picture books. Table 2 displays the names of the texts used and the dates of student conversations.

Table 2

Texts Used and Timeline of Conversations

Title of Text	Author	Before Reading Conversation Date	After Reading Conversation Date
Hurricanes!	Gail Gibbons	11/6/17	11/13/17
Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin	Gene Barretta	11/14/17	11/14/17
Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands	Katherine Roy	11/15/17	11/16/17
Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving	Joseph Bruchac	11/20/17	11/22/17

My data collection began with a teacher research journal. I reflected upon student conversations about text and background knowledge. This led to questions about how to best activate background knowledge, structure a conversation to allow for

maximum student participation, how to confirm schema, and how to clear up misconceptions. I developed visuals and graphic organizers to aid students in activating their background knowledge and participating in a group conversation. Appendix B includes examples of the visuals that I created for student use during conversations. These visuals were placed on the table for students to reference during discussions. In addition, Appendix C contains the graphic organizers students used before and after reading and conversations.

Additionally, I created a video in which I modeled activating my own schema, engaged in a conversation with another teacher about our background knowledge and things we learned from a text, and added information to my background knowledge and addressed misconceptions. These instructional decisions provided students with a concrete example of abstract concepts.

Data Sources

In order to collect an ample amount of data, several different sources were used. First, I observed the students as they participated in conversations about schema before and after reading an informational text. I revisited these conversations and collected more information by listening to audio-recordings. I tracked how many times students explained unique background knowledge, agreed with their peers, disagreed with each other, and expanded on their classmates' ideas. Data collected from these sources offered insight into what students talked about before and after reading and how they interacted.

Additionally, I collected artifacts of students' work. These documents showed the schema that students recorded before reading, after talking with their peers, and after reading. This was a valuable data collection method because it revealed the types of

information students learned from their peers through conversation. Finally, my teacher research journal was used to keep track of my reflections about student interactions during conversations, and student activation and confirmation of background knowledge.

Data Analysis

Data was collected throughout this study in order to draw conclusions about how students participated in conversations. The goal of finding repeating ideas through inductive analysis was met through analyzing the data collected from observation protocols, audio-recordings, and student artifacts. The observation protocols allowed me to chart commonalities between the ways students participated in each conversation. Next, the audio-recordings gave me specific examples of how the students interacted during conversations. The written transcripts of each audio-recording provided me the opportunity to find multiple instances when the students completed the same behavior during different discussions. Analyzing student artifacts allowed me to find out how many facts students learned from each other and the text. Finally, the interviews with the students helped me identify what the students learned from the conversations and each other and gave me insight into their thinking while the conversations were taking place.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

Data for this teacher research study was gathered from a variety of sources including transcripts of students' conversations, notes taken while observing students during discussions, student work artifacts, interviews with students, and a teacher research journal. Shagoury and Power (2012) explained that a teacher can analyze data by looking for "the pieces of data that fit unexpectedly next to each other" and form patterns (p. 136). I followed this process when I studied the four sources of data collected from my eight students. This reflects a case study methodology using a defined group of students.

The remainder of this chapter is an analysis of the data for the following research question: What happens when 3rd and 4th grade students with language learning difficulties participate in a structured conversation about background knowledge before and after reading informational text?

Learning from Peers

In order to facilitate a structured conversation between my students, I created a graphic organizer for my students to help them keep track of their background knowledge before and after conversations with classmates and reading a text. Before a group discussion and reading, the students recorded their background knowledge on the graphic organizer. Next, students participated in a conversation with their peers about their prior knowledge. Then, students revisited the graphic organizer and recorded background

knowledge gained from their discussion. Appendix C shows a blank copy of this graphic organizer.

I was able to use students' completed graphic organizers to discover information that they identified as facts they learned from their peers and added to their background knowledge. Specifically, when I reviewed the artifacts I found that students wrote an average of three new facts that were added to their background knowledge after talking with their peers. Then, I used the transcript of their conversations to confirm that students did indeed learn information from each other during their conversations.

Here is a portion of conversation between Calvin, Joey, and Harrison that illustrates how Calvin learned from his classmates. The students were discussing their background knowledge about great white sharks before reading the book *Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands* by Katherine Roy.

Calvin: They can breathe through their skin.

Joey: They have gills.

Harrison: They're gills.

Teacher: Those are called gills.

Calvin: Alright, now I learned something.

Figure 1 shows that Calvin identified this information as something that he added to his background knowledge after the conversation.

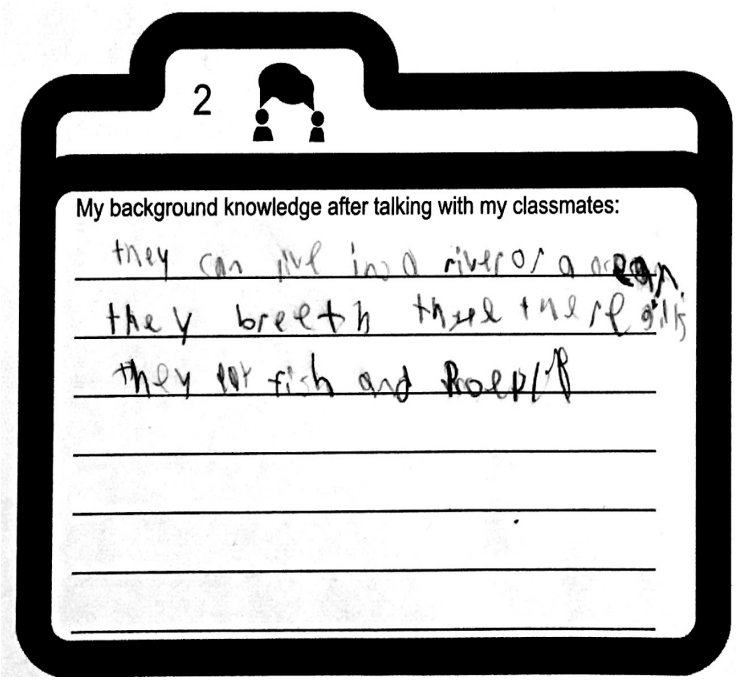

Figure 2. Student artifact.

After talking to his peers, Calvin wrote three facts that were added to his background knowledge. First, he wrote that sharks could live in a river or ocean. Next, he wrote that sharks breathe through their gills. This was the information the students discussed in the conversation transcript displayed above. It is evident that Calvin learned the term gills from his classmates during a before reading conversation, updated his schema, and recorded it on the graphic organizer. The final fact that Calvin identified as new background knowledge learned from his peers was that sharks eat fish and people.

In a second example of students learning from each other, Luke, Mariah, and Noah were discussing their background knowledge about Benjamin Franklin before reading *Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin* by Gene Barretta.

Luke: He discovered electricity.

Mariah: I don't agree.

Teacher: Why do you not agree, Mariah?

Mariah: What did he say again?

Teacher: He discovered electricity. Do you agree or disagree?

Mariah: I agree then.

Teacher: Why do you agree?

Luke: He was flying a kite then lightning struck. That is how he made electricity.

After this exchange, Noah added this information to his background knowledge. Figure 2 shows Noah's record of his new background knowledge.

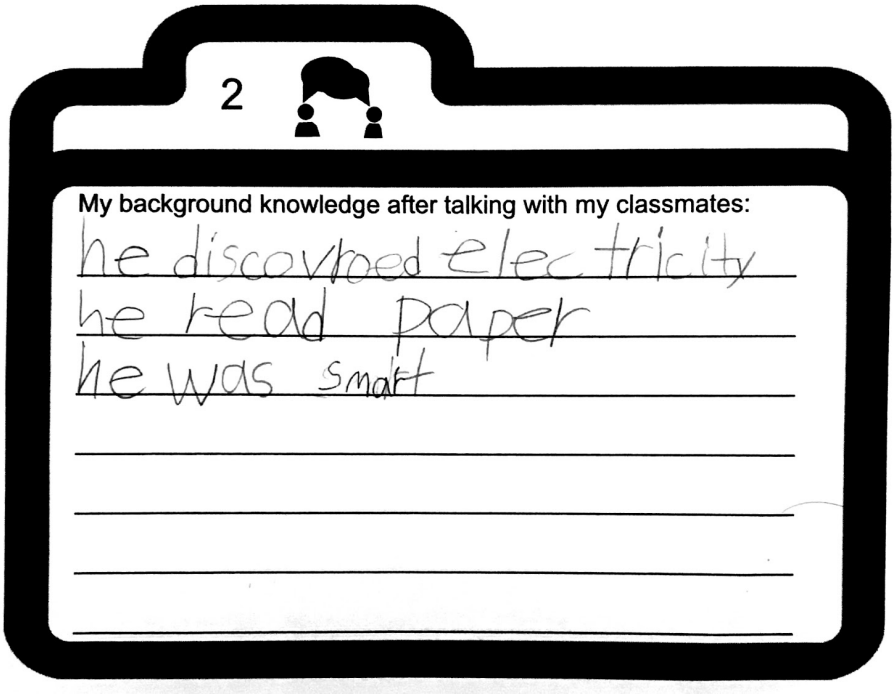

Figure 3. Student artifact.

These conversations and student artifacts led me to the conclusion that students were learned information from their peers during conversations about background knowledge. There are numerous examples of this finding in each before reading conversation and in student artifacts. In fact, the eight students in this study recorded a total of 77 facts that they learned from their peers during pre-reading conversations. This means that each student learned an average of 9.6 facts from their peers during the course of this study.

The finding that students learned from each other was also confirmed by student answers to an interview question after they had completed eight conversations with their peers. In fact, when I asked students to tell me what they learned from their conversations with their classmates, five out of eight students explained that they learned from their peers. Their responses are recorded on Table 3 below.

Table 3

Student Interview Responses

Prompt: Tell me what you learned from your conversations with your classmates.	
Student	Response
Calvin	I learned everything from them. You can learn by it by other people. Every other people.
Noah	You learned more new stuff when people tell you what they know. You learn some more stuff, because if you didn't know that and they did, they told you what was the true thing about it. My classmates said something that wasn't really true about something like about the neighborhood sharks. I was able to tell them the right thing that was about neighborhood sharks.

Table 3 (continued)

Prompt: Tell me what you learned from your conversations with your classmates.	
Student	Response
Luke	They had different questions than me. More information. I learned more information because they told me the answers.
Joey	Some people know different facts than I do. And I know some facts that other people don't know. So they can share with other people so like "Oh, I didn't know that!" and they can add it to their schema.
Mark	A new fact about the book maybe, about what they said.

In conclusion, the transcripts of student conversations, student artifacts, and interview responses proved that students were able to learn topic knowledge from each other during discussions about background knowledge. This is a significant finding because it shows that students can help prepare each other for reading informational text by sharing their funds of knowledge. Moreover, this finding confirms that two widely accepted practices, activating background knowledge before reading and student discussions, can be combined for student benefit.

Expanding on Peer Comments

My students were provided visual tools to remind them how to effectively participate in conversations with their peers. They were given signs with visuals to represent agreeing and disagreeing with their peers, sharing information from their own background knowledge, and adding more information after a classmate's comment. In order to find out if students were able to expand on each other's ideas, I observed students during their conversations and kept a log of how many times they added relevant

information to a peer's statement. Additionally, I used the transcript of their conversations to further investigate this interaction. Finally, I reviewed the reflections about the students' participation that I had written in my teacher research journal. The combination of these three sources lead me to finding that students were able to expand on their classmate's comments during a conversation about background knowledge. This occurred both before reading and after reading a text.

The first conversation students had about background knowledge occurred before the students read *Hurricanes!* by Gail Gibbons. Students shared their prior knowledge about hurricanes. During this discussion, students did not expand on each other's comments. In my teacher research journal dated November 11, 2017 I wrote, "During the first pre-reading conversation, students were quick to agree with each other. However, they did not expand on each others ideas. They bounced around from one topic to another." This fact is also evident in my observation notes from this conversation. Appendix A includes the observation protocol from this conversation. Only two out of the eight students expanded on a peer comment at this time. Below is a portion of the conversation that shows students moved quickly from one fact to another without adding their own knowledge about a peer's comment.

Harrison: They can cause floods.

Calvin: I agree.

Leo: I agree.

Teacher: Go ahead Calvin.

Calvin: Hurricanes can get stronger when they're in the warm water.

Chorus of voices: I agree.

Calvin: Thank you because they can actually get stronger.

Teacher: Do you have any new facts or any more information to add?

Joey: They can break cars.

As this conversation continued, Calvin disagreed with Joey. Then, Harrison expanded on Calvin's comment. This is one example of a student expanding on his peer's thoughts during the first conversation of the study.

Calvin: Wait, what did he say?

Teacher: Go ahead Joey. Say it again.

Joey: They break cars.

Calvin: They don't break cars, but they make cars flood. So I disagree.

Harrison: They flood the motor so they don't work.

Although expanding on peer comments was something students had difficulty with at first, students were able to improve in this area throughout my study. By the third conversation, six out of eight students expanded on their classmate's statements. During the fourth conversation after reading *Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin,* seven out of the eight students added relevant information after their classmates shared a fact. Here is a portion of a conversation between Leo and Noah:

Leo: Um, he learned that lightning is electricity.

Teacher: Who has thoughts about that?

Noah: I can add more information. Ben Franklin, you could say how he made electricity with lightning.

Teacher: Okay, tell us about it.

Noah: He put a kite out with a stick on top, and a metal thing on top, and he flew it, and then lightning struck it, and then it made electricity.

By the fifth conversation, all students were able to expand on their classmates' comments before and after reading the text. Appendix A displays this data on an

observation protocol. I also wrote about this in my teacher research journal on November 18, 2017. I said, “This week, most students no longer relied on me to prompt them about adding onto what their peers said. They were able to expand on each other’s ideas.” Below is an after reading conversation between Joey, Mark, Calvin, and Harrison. They were discussing background knowledge that was confirmed in the text and new facts they learned after reading *Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands.*

> Joey: In the text I heard that they eat elephant seals.
>
> Harrison: And if they don’t get a seal, if they don’t get part of a seal then they have to go find one. Another one.
>
> Mark: I agree because they have to fight for the food, right?
>
> Joey: Sometimes.
>
> Mark: Sometimes they have to fight for the food. And if they lose they have to go find another, another, uh, another seal so they can eat it.
>
> Joey: That, if, once they find an elephant seal they bite it and then it floats to the top. Then they eat their meal.
>
> Calvin: When they lose one teeth they, um, they grow another one.
>
> Harrison: If they lose a tooth, um, that they get um, it comes back in. They can lose like a thousand teeth and it still comes back in. Joey.

This conversation clearly illustrates that the students were able to expand on each other’s comments by adding more information. There are numerous examples of this finding throughout the transcripts of student interviews. This skill developed and strengthened throughout the course of the study and was a key interaction during student conversations. In fact, students expanded on each other’s comments 133 times during the eight conversations. This shows that the students were engaged in the conversations about text and interacted in appropriate ways during group discussions. This finding is

meaningful for the students in my classroom because it proves that students with language learning difficulties can learn to actively participate in conversations with their peers about background knowledge and informational text.

Misconceptions

During before reading and after reading conversations, students agreed and disagreed with each other's statements about background knowledge. During the disagreements, students were able to address each other's misconceptions about a topic. This led to students updating and correcting their schema. Evidence of this pattern of interaction was found in the transcripts of student conversations, in student artifacts, and in observation notes.

For example before reading *Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin,* multiple students had the misconception that Ben Franklin was one of the presidents of the United States. Luke was able to address this misconception with his classmates in the following conversation:

> Leo: He was the first president.
>
> Teacher: Alright, how do you feel about that? He was the first president. Alright, Leo, call on somebody.
>
> Leo: Luke.
>
> Luke: Because…
>
> Teacher: I disagree…
>
> Luke: I disagree because George Washington was the first president.

After participating in this before reading conversation, Noah reviewed the background knowledge he wrote down and identified this misconception on his own

paper. Without prompting from me, Noah crossed off this statement. Figure 3 shows Noah's updated recording sheet.

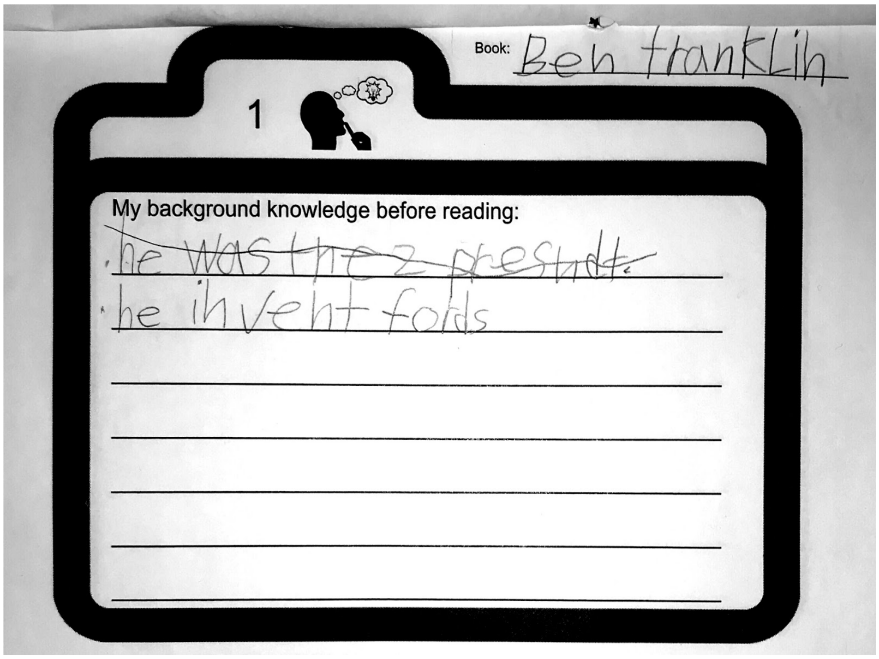

Figure 4. Student Artifact.

The students discussed this misconception again in their conversation after reading. Noah and Leo, who both had the misconception that Ben Franklin was a president before reading, updated their background knowledge. Noah referred to an illustration that showed all of the roles Ben Franklin had played throughout his lifetime. He used this illustration to update his schema.

> Teacher: Okay, Leo, tell us a new fact about Ben Franklin.
>
> Leo: He was not a president.
>
> Noah: Because the book didn't show us. Like the front book, it showed us what he worked for on the rocks, and none of them said president, so he

was never a president.

This finding was also evident in the students' final conversations about the text *Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving* by Joseph Bruchac. Before reading, Calvin, Mark, Harrison, and Joey discussed their background knowledge about Thanksgiving. Harrison and Joey helped Calvin update a misconception in the transcript below.

> Calvin: You celebrate because it is almost Christmas.
>
> Teacher: Okay, that's why they're celebrating? Is that why we celebrate Thanksgiving because it's almost Christmas?
>
> Harrison: I disagree because Thanksgiving is in November. Not even close to Christmas.
>
> Teacher: Okay, and what about celebrating it? The reason it's celebrated?
>
> Harrison: Because we are thankful for everything we have.
>
> Teacher: Okay. What do you want to add, Joey?
>
> Joey: You celebrate it because that means, it's like, a sign of friendship.

Figure 4 shows Calvin's recording sheet after this conversation with his classmates. He independently crossed out his misconception and added a fact that he learned from his classmates. Moreover, Appendix C displays the observation protocols with evidence of student disagreement. Analyzing the data made it clear that students were able to identify and confront misconceptions during discussions with peers.

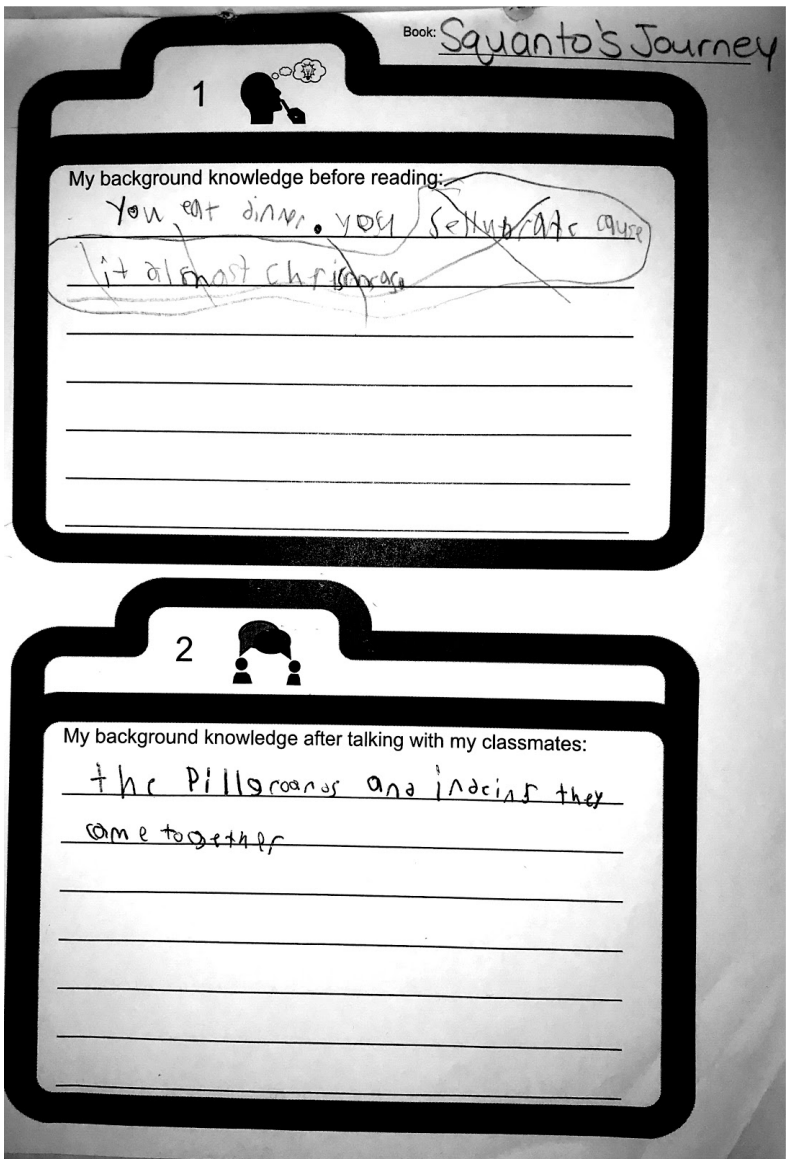

Figure 5. Student Artifact.

Finally, the three major findings of this teacher research study lead me to the conclusion that structured conversations about background knowledge were beneficial for the students in my classroom. Overall, they learned from other, used their receptive and expression language skills to expand on each other's comments, and addressed misconceptions.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

According to Shagoury and Power (2012), teacher research provides educators opportunities to solve problems in local settings and create environments that benefit learning. My personal classroom and the elementary school as whole served as the local setting in which I was attempting to solve a problem. At this level, I conclude that conversations about background knowledge can help students gain knowledge about a topic. The data suggests that students learned information from their peers through discussions and added it to their own background knowledge. This finding will help solve the problem of students lacking background knowledge in my local setting because this study shows that students can serve as experts on specific topics and teach their classmates. During this study, I also attempted to find a way to prepare my students for the reading of informational text as they progress through the grades. I have inferred from the data that my students will be able to use the strategies of confirming background knowledge and addressing misconceptions while reading informational text.

This teacher research study aimed to create a best environment for learning. I conclude that providing my students visual aides, giving them multiple opportunities for group discussions, and providing scaffolding during the conversations created an ideal environment for student growth. My students became more confident and independent during discussions throughout the whole study. The data supports this conclusion because the observation protocols show that students interacted in more ways as they gained more practice with the conversations. The transcripts of their conversations show that scaffolding was lessened as the study progressed. Furthermore, Harrison explained that

the conversations helped him gain confidence. He said, “I’m not getting shyer because I’m like usually really shy. It helped me do better at being shy. I am able to talk to people that I don’t know.”

The data from this study suggests that the strategy of discussing background knowledge before and after reading can be applied to other texts that students are required to read. This could include other trade books and textbooks from content area classes. The findings demonstrate that students benefit from this strategy because they can help each other discover misconceptions, expand their understandings through discussions, and learn content from each other.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was its span of time as it was conducted over only three weeks. Although the students read four books and participated in eight conversations, more discussions using a variety of texts would need to be analyzed to gain a more complete understanding of the benefits. Further, due to the time restraints, students did not have the opportunity to gain full independence with this skill. A small amount of scaffolding was still needed in the final conversations for all students to participate in appropriate ways. To get a more accurate measure of what happens when student participate in these conversations, they would need more opportunities for independent practice. Also, the small sample size of students was a limitation. Due to this defined group of students, the results cannot be generalized for an entire student population in the grade levels studied.

Implications

This study combined three areas of literacy that have been individually researched. The research question was addressed through the data analysis, but other questions emerged throughout the study. Although my initial study focused on the student's responses during the conversations, I realized that teacher scaffolding played an important role in the students participation. Further research could address types of scaffolding that are the most effective for students engaging in group conversations about background knowledge and information learned from text.

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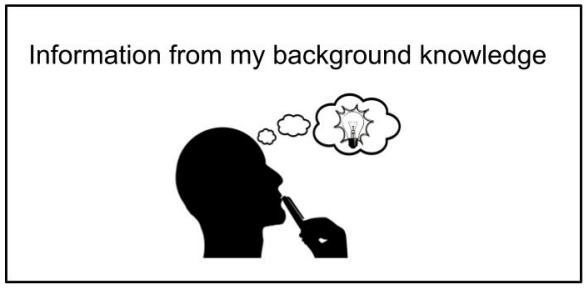
Appendix A

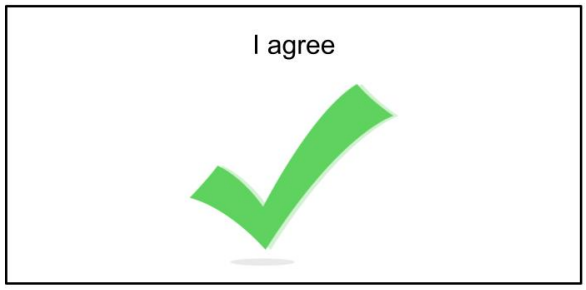
Student Answers from the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

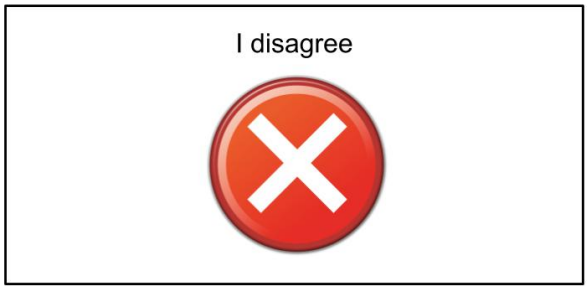
Selected Answers from the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*					
	Mark	Joey	Calvin	Luke	Noah
How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?	4	1	1	2	3
How do you feel about starting a new book?	4	2	4	1	1
How do you feel about reading your school books?	4	1	1	2	4
How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?	4	1	2	2	1
How do you feel when you read out loud in class?	4	1	1	1	1
How do you feel about learning from a book?	2	2	4	1	1
How do you feel about reading in school?	3	1	1	4	1
How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?	2	1	1	4	2
How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?	3	1	3	4	2

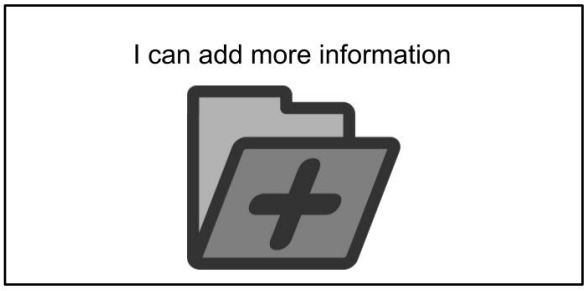
Appendix B

Visuals









Appendix C

Graphic Organizers

Book: _____

1 

My background knowledge before reading:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 

My background knowledge after talking with my classmates:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Book: _____

3 

My background knowledge that was confirmed by the text:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 

My new background knowledge after reading:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D

Observation Protocols

Observation Protocol- Before Reading				
Date: 11/6/17		**Text:** *Hurricanes*		**Conversation #:** 1
Student	**New Information**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Disagreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	0	0	0	0
2 Joey	3	0	0	1
3 Harrison	3	0	0	3
4 Calvin	4	1	1	0
5 Mariah	1	0	0	0
6 Luke	1	0	0	0
7 Noah	1	0	0	0
8 Leo	2	1	0	0

Observation Protocol- After Reading				
Date: 11/13/17		**Text:** *Hurricanes*		**Conversation #:** 2
Student	**Confirmed prior knowledge in text**	**Explained new information learned**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	0	1	2	4
2 Joey	0	1	1	4
3 Harrison	0	1	1	1
4 Calvin	0	1	1	1
5 Mariah	0	1	0	1
6 Luke	0	1	0	0
7 Noah	0	2	1	0
8 Leo	0	1	0	0

Observation Protocol- Before Reading				
Date: 11/14/17		**Text:** *Now & Ben*		**Conversation #:** 3
Student	**New Information**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Disagreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	2	2	0	1
2 Joey	2	2	0	3
3 Harrison	3	4	1	4
4 Calvin	3	0	1	0
5 Mariah	2	2	0	0
6 Luke	2	0	1	1
7 Noah	1	1	2	2
8 Leo	1	2	0	1

Observation Protocol- After Reading				
Date: 11/14/17-11/15/17		**Text:** *Now & Ben*		**Conversation #:** 4
Student	**Confirmed prior knowledge in text**	**Explained new information learned**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	1	2	1	5
2 Joey	0	2	2	2
3 Harrison	1	1	1	3
4 Calvin	1	3	0	0
5 Mariah	0	4	0	1
6 Luke	0	2	0	2
7 Noah	0	1	4	6
8 Leo	1	2	0	1

Observation Protocol- Before Reading				
Date: 11/15/17		**Text:** *Neighborhood Sharks*		**Conversation #:** 5
Student	**New Information**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Disagreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	3	6	0	4
2 Joey	3	3	1	4
3 Harrison	6	1	0	3
4 Calvin	4	4	1	6
5 Mariah	2	1	0	2
6 Luke	0	2	0	4
7 Noah	2	1	0	2
8 Leo	1	4	0	2

Observation Protocol- After Reading				
Date: 11/17/17		**Text:** *Neighborhood Sharks*		**Conversation #:** 6
Student	**Confirmed prior knowledge in text**	**Explained new information learned**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	0	3	3	2
2 Joey	0	3	0	3
3 Harrison	2	2	0	4
4 Calvin	0	2	1	3
5 Mariah	0	2	6	2
6 Luke	1	1	0	2
7 Noah	0	3	3	5
8 Leo	2	2	0	1

Observation Protocol- Before Reading				
Date: 11/20/17		**Text:** *Squanto's Journey*		**Conversation #:** 7
Student	**New Information**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Disagreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	1	1	2	3
2 Joey	2	1	0	2
3 Harrison	1	1	1	3
4 Calvin	1	0	1	0
5 Mariah	0	0	0	1
6 Luke	1	1	0	1
7 Noah	1	0	0	1
8 Leo	1	2	0	0

Observation Protocol- After Reading				
Date: 11/21/17-11/22/17		**Text:** *Squanto's Journey*		**Conversation #:** 8
Student	**Confirmed prior knowledge in text**	**Explained new information learned**	**Agreed with Peer**	**Expanded on Peer Comment**
1 Mark	1	3	1	4
2 Joey	0	2	1	6
3 Harrison	1	3	0	1
4 Calvin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 Mariah	1	2	1	2
6 Luke	0	2	1	4
7 Noah	0	1	2	5
8 Leo	0	0	3	4