

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By
JOANNE McKAY
Norman, Oklahoma
2006

UMI Number: 3211360



UMI Microform 3211360

Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC
CURRICULUM

BY

Sara Ann Beach, Ph.D.

Pamela G. Fry, Ed.D.

Kathy Latrobe, Ph.D.

Michael Angelotti, Ph.D.

Linda J. McKinney, Ed.D.

c Copyright by JOANNE MCKAY 2006
All Rights Reserved.

Acknowledgments

There are several important people in my life that made this accomplishment possible for me. First of all, thanks to my wonderful boys, Ryan, Michael, and Bradley, you are a constant source of joy. You help me keep things in perspective, have a sense of humor, and help me to remember the truly important things in life. To my parents, Regina and Dave Dooling, I thank you for encouraging me throughout my life and for being loving, generous and thoughtful grandparents to my children. You have been a tremendous help to me in so many ways and I can not thank you enough. I also want to thank my doctoral committee. This was a great group to work with and I appreciate all the encouragement, feedback, and insights that they shared with me. To Kathy Latrobe and Linda McKinney, thank you both so much for your contributions throughout this process. You were kind and pleasant to work with. To Mike Angelotti (aka “Dr. A”), the idea for the study evolved from your class and a response to “Bullfrogs.” Thanks, too, for introducing me to the OWP. To Pam Fry, thank you for encouraging me to pursue a doctorate and for the mentoring and friendship that goes back to my undergraduate days. To Sally Beach, I can’t thank you enough for the time and effort you spent in helping me think more deeply about the data and what it means. I appreciated your questions, comments, and suggestions in pulling it all together. You were a great mentor and a friend. Thank you, “Mrs. Ryan” and your students. It was a pleasure to be part of your class for a while. Finally, thanks to Ned, Ellen, Beth, Oscar, Roger, and Alan, I enjoyed our book talks. You have taught me a lot.

Table of Contents

<u>Heading</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
I. Chapter One: Introduction	1
A. Purpose of the study	4
B. Theoretical framework: Critical literacy	5
C. Literacy and language development	8
D. Figure 1: The synergy in language learning and literacy development	9
II. Chapter Two: Literature Review	11
A. Reader response	11
1. Reader's stance	14
2. Personal responses	17
B. Intertextuality	21
1. Intertextuality and the reader	23
2. Reading and writing connection	29
C. Sociocultural learning	34
III. Chapter Three: Methodology	43
A. Recruiting procedures	43
1. School site	46
2. Participants	46
3. Classroom context	48
B. Data sources and collection	51

1. Sociogram	52
2. Field notes	53
a. Types of reading experiences	55
b. Comprehension and response activities	57
c. Table 1: Reading Experience Observations	58
3. Interviews	58
4. Researcher's role	60
C. Data Analysis	61
1. Sociogram	61
2. Field notes and interviews	63
3. Table 2: Intertextual Links	65
IV. Chapter Four: Findings	68
A. Intertextual links by literary elements	69
1. Links by character	70
a. Same character	70
b. Different characters	73
c. Character to people	75
2. Links by plot	77
3. Links by setting	79
4. Links by illustrations	80
5. Links by point of view	82
B. Links by genre	83
C. Source Texts	84

1. Media	85
2. Personal text sources	87
D. Manifestation	88
1. Prompted links	89
2. Spontaneous links	90
E. Acknowledgment of links	91
1. Why links were disregarded	94
F. Links by reading ability	95
V. Chapter Five: Discussion	99
A. Intertextuality	100
1. Literary elements and genre	100
2. Source texts	106
3. Spontaneous and prompted links	105
B. The Social Construction of Meaning	110
C. Implications	113
1. Reading ability	114
2. Comprehension	115
3. Limitations	119
References	121
Appendix	

Chapter One

Introduction

I was a young child in the late 1960s and the early 1970s when the television show “Gilligan’s Island” was popular. I still remember that show well. I remember details about the characters, the setting, and the premise of the show. I also remember feeling frustrated when Gilligan would somehow always manage to ruin their chances of being rescued off the island. At the same time, I felt sorry for him when everyone would blame him for messing up, because he always meant well. As I grew older, I would occasionally watch a rerun. I responded differently then; the show was funny in its absurdity. Did the show’s writers think that the audience would buy the fact that these seven people would somehow find themselves on the same boat? I mean, the millionaire and the movie star probably had their own yachts, right? Do millionaires actually carry around suitcases full of money with them for an afternoon out? Does anyone dress in an evening gown to bask in the sun? The characters were labeled and behaved in stereotypical ways. The professor used big words that no one understood; the men did manual labor, built the huts, and chopped down trees to fashion into cars and other luxuries. The women cooked the meals, made coconut cream pies, and washed the dishes that they somehow had. Of course, the millionaire would hire Gilligan to do his chores, and Gilligan also served as his caddy when playing golf. In the final analysis, “Gilligan’s Island” was a silly show about seven very different people who cared about each other and it was good for a laugh or two, and it’s still a part of popular culture.

My reminiscing about Gilligan's Island parallels Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory of reading and Beach's (1993) discussion of reader response theories. For example, my responses to "Gilligan's Island" changed over time and in different viewing experiences. I considered different aspects in my interpretation including empathizing with a character, questioning motives, critiquing the writing, and considering social and cultural representations. I haven't seen the show for years, but it has stuck with me for some reason. I even remember the theme song word for word. I happened to think about "Gilligan's Island" as I was reading my field notes and recalled the scene:

I was collecting data for my dissertation research; I was sitting in Mrs. Ryan's (all names for people and places are pseudonyms) second grade classroom after observing the class when it was time for lunch. The students all lined up, and when Mrs. Ryan indicated they were ready to go, the children all started singing, in the tune of the "Gilligan's Island" theme:

My mouth is quiet, my hands are still,

I'm standing straight and tall.

My eyes are looking straight ahead

I'm ready for the hall,

I'm ready for the hall

I found myself singing the next line to myself: "The weather started getting rough, the tiny ship was tossed..." I made a notation: "Time for lunch, students line up, sing song (Gilligan's Island tune)." Hearing the students sing the song

initially evoked a pleasant, amused response from me as I made an intertextual connection between the new version of the song and the show.

“Intertextuality” is a term coined by Kristeva (1980) that elaborated on the ideas of Saussure’s linguistic signs and Bakhtin’s ideas of the dialogic nature of literature and language. This dialogic view recognizes multiple voices, viewpoints and interpretations of texts. The act of making meaning from literature includes making intertextual connections between a piece of literature and other “texts” that include one’s experiences, cultural texts (TV, movies, etc.), other literature read, and the social context. The word “text” derives from Latin meaning “to weave” or “woven”. “Text” traditionally meant the actual words or signs that made up a work of literature or other print materials. Through the influence of literary theory and semiotics, a text is now widely recognized as any signifying practice that includes both linguistic and non-linguistic signs, such as utterances, gestures, thoughts, art, music, drama, film, and any sign that communicates meaning (Allen, 2000; Hartman, 1992; 1995). These texts act upon each other resulting in “intertextuality”, a term to describe a wide range of relationships within and between texts, literary and otherwise, and the people who interact, transact, or engage with these texts.

While I made an intertextual connection between the children singing the song and “Gilligan’s Island”, more meaningful to me was the connection I made between the children singing the song and the text of my childhood. After all, I was about their age when the show was originally aired. Hartman (1995) described this as “innertext”, ideas that are remembered and constructed in the

past and stored in memory or “meanings under construction at any given moment” (p. 523). Therefore, intertextual connections are sometimes intentional when we reason and draw analogies for whatever purpose, and sometimes spontaneous, as when I heard the children sing, and include connections between various kinds of texts.

Purpose of the study

The purposes of this study were to explore the intertextual links that students made during a variety of reading experiences and the role of the discourse community when making meaning from texts. The questions guiding the study were: 1. What kinds of intertextual links do children make during classroom reading experiences? 2. What links are acknowledged, and therefore, contribute to the meaning-making process? 3. What links are disregarded? 4. Why are they disregarded? Addressing these questions is an important consideration in examining the nature of reading and reading comprehension for developing readers as schools across the country are striving to meet the tenets of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 that holds states, districts, and schools accountable for student achievement, and requires children to be proficient readers by the end of third grade. The NCLB Act further asserted that “our students are not reading nearly well enough” and noted that children who read well in the early grades are far more successful in later years; and those who fall behind often stay behind when it comes to academic achievement. Further, while the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1999) shows reading achievement stability or growth since 1971, the data also

revealed that that only about two-thirds of nine year old children in our country could identify facts from simple paragraphs and make inferences about short passages. Also, fewer than two in ten of the students could successfully search for specific information in texts, interrelate ideas, and make generalizations. Another statistic from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2002) indicated that only 31% of our nation's fourth graders perform at or above the proficient reading achievement level.

Intertextual connections encompass such factors addressed in the assessments cited above, including searching for specific information, interrelating ideas, making inferences and making generalizations. Therefore, examining intertextual connections is an important factor to study with children who are expected to be able to do these things as readers and as literate members of society. In this study, I addressed the kinds of intertextual links second grade children, who are still developing into fluent readers, made during various classroom reading experiences, what links were acknowledged or disregarded and why. Second grade is a critical time in children's literacy development. While listening to stories read aloud to them is still an important part of comprehending, thinking about literature, building vocabulary and a sense of story structure, second graders also are expected to do more independent reading. They are in a transition from reading simple texts and picture books independently to reading chapter books with expanded vocabulary, fewer illustrations, and are expected to transition from learning how to read to reading and comprehending texts from across content areas. While studies on

intertextuality have been conducted with younger students, all were conducted with teacher read aloud experiences, and none addressed the links made when younger children read and created meaning from literature they have read with a partner or independently. This study addressed the kinds of intertextual links second grade children of varying reading achievement levels made through different modes of reading within the context of the classroom community.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Literacy

Literacy is a construct that encompasses language skills and thought processes coupled with interacting within and being part of a culture embedded in values, norms, and beliefs. It is an ongoing developmental, generative, and transformative process. Freire and Macedo (1987) conceptualized literacy as a means of emancipation and empowerment. The principles of critical literacy focus on issues of power and promote reflection, transformation and action. Freire (1970) noted that from a critical literacy perspective, readers are active participants in the reading process and students need to move beyond passive acceptance of text to questioning, examining, and disputing what they read. In classrooms, students are positioned as researchers of language, making classrooms, printed texts and visual expressions (such as illustrations, dramatic presentations, and art), rich resources for their examination and higher order thinking. Oldfather and Dahl (1994) described literacy as being accomplished through interactions that take place in discourse (in and out of school) between participants who construct understandings about what constitutes literacy, what it means to be literate, and the norms and expectations for participation in

literacy activities. They further asserted that these interactions contribute to one's sense of self as a literate person, "a reader, writer, thinker, and knower" (p. 142). Barton (1994) further described an ecological view of literacy and illustrated that there is a variety of literacies in existence that are practiced in different disciplines and in different social situations. He defined "a" literacy as: "a stable, coherent, identifiable, configuration of practices" that are evident in different domains of life (p. 38). For example, there are notions of computer literacy, science literacy and math literacy. Within a view of critical literacy, one learns about and interacts with the world and makes choices in becoming literate in different domains, such as science or math, or other areas of interest.

A critical view of literacy includes the recognition that one is a thinking being capable of survival at a basic level (that is, being able to adequately function within a system), and capable of creating and transforming oneself and society at a broader level (that is, setting goals for oneself and working to improve society). To be literate in this sense is to be privy as to how language and literacy, text and discourse are implicated in the power relations of daily life (Luke, O'Brien, & Comber, 2001). I view the broad goal of literacy instruction as the development of students into critical thinkers, readers, writers and users of language, for their own sense of autonomy and for their positive participation and contributions to society. To be literate is to be empowered. Language is a vehicle for communication and a basis for becoming literate.

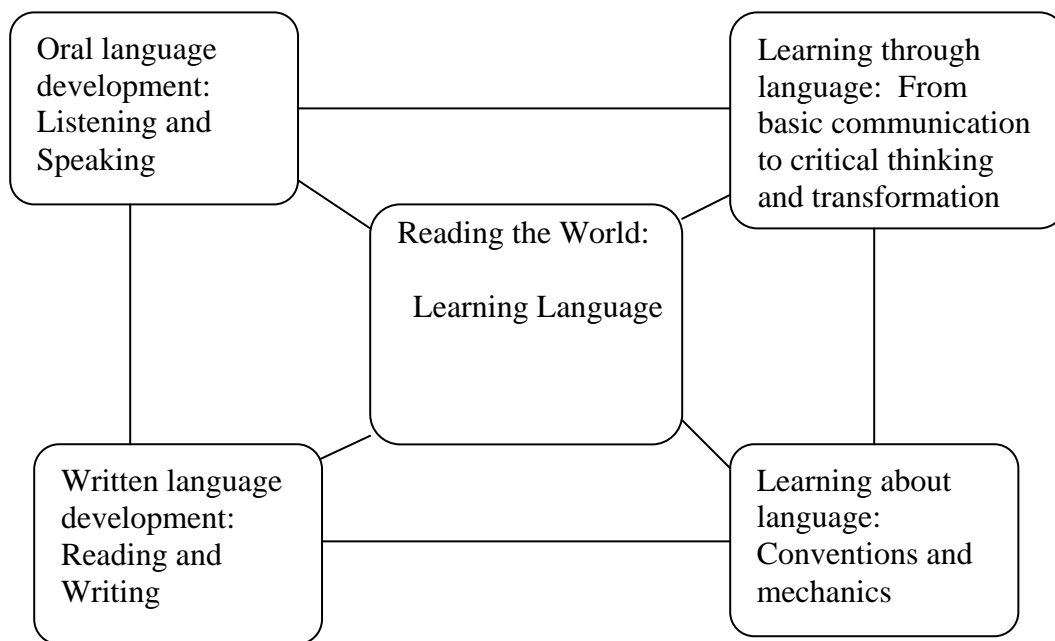
Literacy and Language Development

Language is embedded in one's reality from the time of birth and is developed as one grows and has new experiences. Through language we are socialized in various social institutions and the values, norms, and cultural practices within those places (such as school) as we grow and become members of the broader society (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Language includes the processes of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The capacity for language is innate, but that capacity can only be realized in social settings (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Freire and Macedo (1987) illustrated that children first develop an awareness of, and make sense of their environment and then use language purposefully. Halliday (1978) recognized that as children grow and develop, they use oral language for a variety of purposes. He asserted that initially children use language instrumentally; that is to satisfy needs. Then, language is used to regulate the behavior of others, such as saying "no" to a parent or others. Interactional language is apparent when children begin to converse with others in a sustained dialogue. Personal language is used to draw attention to one's uniqueness or abilities. Heuristic language is apparent when children question and ask "why"? The Imaginative function of language is used when children pretend and role-play. Finally, Informative language is apparent when children relate information to others. Children begin to recognize that written language is purposeful as well and begin to understand book orientation concepts, directionality concepts and letter and word concepts on their way to becoming

proficient readers, writers, and users of language (Clay, 1972). Figure 1 outlines the relationship between literacy and language development.

Figure 1: The synergy in literacy learning and language development



I developed Figure 1 to illustrate my view of the synergistic relationship of literacy and language development. “Reading the World” is an idea related to Freire (1970) and relates to recognizing the purpose and the context when engaging in language experiences. This begins as infants are born into a particular culture and are nurtured in their environment. They are socialized primarily within the home, then secondarily to the outside world. Language is

embedded in the socialization process. Oral language development is primary and includes the reciprocal processes of listening and speaking. Written language development is secondary and includes the reciprocal processes of reading and writing. “Learning about language” includes developing an understanding about the functional nature of language as well as the conventions and skills/strategies involved in becoming proficient users of language.

Learning through Language is a means to communicate and survive on a basic level, and is a vehicle for generating new knowledge and thinking critically to create and transform society on a broader level (Freire, 1970; Halliday, 1978). All of this takes place in an ever-changing environment as one engages in new experiences and develops physically, intellectually, and emotionally, in a world that is also constantly changing. Language is used to not only communicate on a functional level, but also to shape and construct reality. That is, through language we become aware that we are thinking beings capable of survival on a basic level. We live within and function through a shared set of understandings and norms with other members of society, and it is through language that we transform ourselves and society on a broader level, thus creating a new reality.

While oral language precedes written language, they are reciprocal processes that enhance and reinforce each other. Learning and creating meaning through language is embedded in all these factors as one develops as a literate person. In schools, an engaging environment that actively includes the learner in the process helps facilitate problem solving, creativity, and critical thought.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The perspectives of reader response theory, intertextual theory and sociocultural learning were used to help me interpret the connections children made during classroom reading experiences. The main themes in the professional literature on reader response studies indicated that readers interpret, respond, and think about texts in diverse ways, and that there is not only one meaning found in literature. Further, readers take a particular stance when reading depending upon the purpose for reading. Researchers have explored intertextuality as a heuristic into cognitive processes within a reader and as an element of composing texts. Sociocultural learning studies suggested that the discourse community can influence how one interprets classroom experiences and the responses one makes to literature as well as the intertextual connections made. Diverse perspectives are inherently part of classroom learning experiences, as in any social situation.

Reader Response

Recognizing that readers interpret, respond, and think about texts in diverse ways and that there is not only one meaning to be found in literature was not a focus in educational research or instruction until about the 1960's. I.A. Richards in 1929 is credited with being the first researcher to study reader response with students by identifying stereotypical responses to literature by gifted Cambridge University students. Rosenblatt (1939) described the transactions between literary works and readers and asserted that personal

experiences were powerful in shaping readers' literary experiences. In the twenty years following Rosenblatt's (1939) work, American scholars and teachers were preoccupied with textual criticism that excluded concern with reader reactions and factors outside the text itself. By the 1960's, the importance of reader reaction invited a shift in perception about the nature of reading and comprehension, and gave voice to the individual reader.

Rosenblatt (1978) distinguished between taking "efferent" and "aesthetic" stances in her transactional theory of reading. She used the term "transaction" to denote the relationship between a reader and the written text. Rosenblatt (1978) stated that "transaction" implied that the reader brought to the text a network of past experiences not only in life, but also experiences with literature. In the reading situation, Rosenblatt (1978) described the poem as the literary work that is evoked during the transaction between reader and text. In this view, the text and the reader mutually act on each other to evoke a reaction. It is situational, in a particular time and place, an event in and of itself. Further, when reading, one takes a particular stance, or approach to the text. The reader has a purpose and focuses attention ranging from the extremes of an aesthetic stance to an efferent stance on a continuum of responses. Rosenblatt (1978) explained that efferent reading is when attention is centered predominantly on what is to be extracted and retained after the reading event. An aesthetic stance is when the reader focuses on reading as a lived through experience, including perception through the senses, feelings, and intuitions. Rosenblatt (1978) explained that reading as a lived through experience includes the notion that

readers are aware of the verbal signs as well as any past psychological events involving particular words and referents. Attention is also given to the sounds and rhythm of the words as one transacts with the text.

Rosenblatt's (1978) work, in combination with cognitive-based studies of comprehension at the time, led to addressing implications for schools, including studies on responses to poetry and studying classroom constraints that limited attention to reader response. In the 1980's and early 1990's, the increase of social constructivism, post-structuralism, feminism, and cultural/media studies led to an interest in focusing on transactions embedded in social and cultural contexts. The history of reader response research has given us categories of responses that developed over time and have shifted from specific to global considerations. Beach (1993) explicated these as five primary theoretical perspectives described as textual responses, experiential responses, psychological responses, social responses and cultural responses. Textual responses focus on how readers draw on and deploy their knowledge of text and genre conventions. These responses are objective and do not take into account the emotions of the reader. Textual responses rely on how the written word is used to create meaning rather than on the different meanings it may evoke in different readers. Experiential responses focus on the nature of the reader's engagement or experiences with text. These responses include identifying with characters, imaging, and creating a text world. Experiential responses are broader in nature than textual responses in that they recognize the emotions, attitudes, beliefs and interests of the reader. Reading is seen as an experience as

the reader transacts with the text. Psychological responses focus on the reader's cognitive or subconscious processes and how those processes vary according to both unique individual and developmental levels. These types of responses include questioning the motives of the author or different characters, exploring moral issues, and include higher-level thinking and evaluating the text. Social responses focus on the context of the response as well as the particular social role of the reader. The notion of social dynamics and one's perceived place in that milieu can affect how the reader responds. Cultural responses focus on how a reader's cultural background, attitudes, and values as well as the larger cultural and historical context shape responses.

While these perspectives can provide a means to view the text from features to which one may not naturally attend, the notion of reading as a transaction is important to facilitate those responses in readers.

Reader's Stance. Applebee (1978) conducted a study which included tasks with children ages six, nine, thirteen, and seventeen to explore the spectator role and to glean their subjective and personal responses to literature. He asked the students to discuss stories they know, to retell unfamiliar material, to explain proverbs, and to give reasons for liking or not liking particular texts. He found that during the earliest stages studied, ages two to six years old, the child's representations of literary experience were simple and included a one-to-one correspondence between the story and its mental representation. There was no evidence of children recoding, summarizing, or categorizing at this age. The basic principle is an enactive one wherein parts of a story seemed to be linked

sequentially one to another. Further, he suggested that this may be why children take pleasure in hearing a story over and over and word by word exactness in retelling a story. Applebee (1978) did not have the children at this age retell the story or express their reasons for liking or disliking it as he felt it was not developmentally appropriate for them to do so. His study indicated that young children would believe that some characters were real, but were not too sure about others. For example, some might believe that Cinderella was real but that giants do not exist. Another finding was that children as young as two and a half years old began to adopt simple aspects and forms of literature, such as the use of a title or recurring fairy tale phrases such as “once upon a time”, “the end”, and “they lived happily ever after” when telling stories. His study also found that children develop expectations about the actions and events that will appear in stories; for example, that witches are wicked and lions are brave. In the next stage, from age seven to eleven, children represented a story in terms of the characteristics which it shares with other literary experiences. The children also began to give systematic reasons for liking or disliking stories. By age nine, he found that belief in fictional characters disappeared. Applebee (1978) felt that children were very literal in responding to literature until about the ages of twelve to fifteen. He stated it was only until then could children discuss literature analytically, look at the motives of characters, examine the structure of literature, or see literature as a way of discussing life. He noted that the limitations of his development of responses included the fact that he summarized the child’s preferred way of responding, that is, what they do when

they have a choice about what to say and how to say it, or the possibilities of responses that might emerge in interactions with a teacher or peers. This study did not consider the social aspects of responding to literature and he rejected the idea that younger children could respond critically and express opinions about what they read or about what was read to them.

Many (1994) examined Rosenblatt's concept of stance in response to literature and the relationship of one's stance to an understanding of literary works. The purposes of her study were to describe the stances taken in eighth graders' responses to literature, to analyze the relationship between the reader's stance in a response and the level of understanding reached in the response, and to analyze whether the relationship between reader stance and level of understanding was consistent across individual texts. The participants were 51 eighth-grade students, 26 males and 25 females, in two classrooms in two different schools. One school was in a low-socioeconomic area and the other school was in a middle- to upper-socioeconomic level. Three realistic short stories were chosen to allow the students to complete the reading in one sitting. Students were asked to read the selection then respond to the prompt that instructed them to write whatever they wanted about what they just read. Data were collected in three different episodes over a nine-week period and were analyzed to determine the primary stance of the response as a whole and the level of understanding reached. The level of understanding indicated the degree to which the response is tied to story events and the level of abstract generalization reached in the response. The four levels of understanding are

understanding the literal meaning of story, interpreting some story events, understanding of specific story events through analogy to self or world, and reaching a generalized belief or understanding about life. The results of the study indicated that 33% of the total responses were written from the most aesthetic stance. She suggested that responses written from an aesthetic stance were associated with significantly higher levels of understanding and stated these findings highlight the importance of fostering the aesthetic stance when students respond to literature. Many (1994) noted that further research was needed to be conducted to consider not only the stance take in children's responses to literature, but also on the reader's stance during the actual reading event, and the stance children take in their response to informational texts as opposed to literary works. This study seemed to support Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory of reading in terms of aesthetic reading of literature. Many's (1994) study was limited to personal written responses and not in the context of sharing or discussing with others who read and responded to the same short stories.

Personal Responses. Rosenblatt (1978) noted that readers needed to share their initial aesthetic response to books to connect to the feelings they experience as they live within a book. She explained that these feelings can be later explored more critically, but inviting an initial personal response is an important part of engaging students in reading experiences. Wilhelm (1995) studied the dimensions of reader response with his students and suggested that using drama and art was a promising means to respond to literature for those

students who were less engaged readers. He described this as a “vehicle for letting less engaged readers into the secrets of engaged reading” (p. 86). Short, Kaufman and Kahn (2000) described their work with students and using webs, sketches, charts, and diagrams in their response journals. They noted that the children made wider connections with literature and thought more broadly about it. The students were interviewed about how their responding in a variety of ways affected their thinking. The students (aged nine through twelve) noted that these kinds of responses allowed them to express their feelings, to learn more about the book, to make more connections and to experience the emotions in the story. They also stated that their responses helped them talk more deeply about the book when they met for discussion.

Lehman and Scharer (1996) explored the similarities and differences between adults’ and children’s responses to the same literature. They designed an action-research project to help preservice and inservice teachers experience first-hand children’s responses to *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLaughlan. Data were collected from five university children’s literature classes. The adults (N=129) recorded their thoughts and feelings during reading and noted topics or portions of the book they wished to discuss with peers. The adults also collected verbal or written responses from at least one child in grades three through eight as the child read or listened to the book. Data collected about the children’s (N=140) responses included transcriptions and notes taken by adults during conversations, pictures drawn by children, and children’s journals. Then, the university students brought both sets of responses to class to

share during large group discussions. Data analysis included identifying two broad sources of response, reader-based and text-based. Reader-based responses related to personal feelings, values and preferences, and connections made by the reader to experiences or other reading experiences. Text-based responses were more analytical and interpretive in relation to literary elements and literary structure of the text and the author's writing style. Lehman and Scharer (1996) found that initial responses by both children and adults were more reader-based than text-based. The children's responses were more related to the relationships and feelings of the characters and events that captured their imagination. The adults' responses focused more on literary elements and deeper meanings. Text-based responses were more prevalent after the adults engaged in conversations with their peers, and the authors suggested that discussion may help children become more analytical in their responses. While the study was limited in scope, the authors made an important point in noting that the nature of classroom discussion influences how one responds to texts.

Trousdale and McMillan (2003) conducted a longitudinal study on a young girl's responses to "feminist" and "patriarchal" folktales. Data were collected during five interviews with the girl at age eight and twelve. These researchers were interested in the effect that traditional folktales had on children. Traditional folktales had weak, silent, and passive female characters and they set out to question what children's responses would be to more feminist tales whose protagonists do not conform to patriarchal expectations for females. They found three feminist folktales for the participant to read. They met with an eight year

old girl five times in sessions a week apart. One of the researchers would read to the child and paused at several places to discuss the story. Field notes were collected as well as an interview with the child's mother. The same procedure was conducted when the child was twelve years old. Then, the data were compared between her responses as an eight year old and as a twelve year old. Trousdale and McMillan (2003) found developmental differences in the child's responses. At age eight, she seemed to accept magical elements in the stories while at age twelve she expressed how unrealistic they were and she characterized the stories differently in terms of themes. The main thesis in this study was that the child had sense of personal agency at twelve and questioned patriarchal heroines such as Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Rapunzel. The child questioned the passivity of such characters and connected to strong women in her real life, including her grandmother. She described strength as including inner strength and self-confidence. This case study highlighted that underlying messages in literature can be sent to readers about gender stereotypes and roles. The child made intertextual connections between the characters and her own life, and used those connections to critique and respond to the different stories she read. Personal responses to literature include making connections between what is being read with what one has read previously as well as making connections to one's personal experiences and other cultural messages. Therefore, the responses a reader makes to literature are intertextual in nature as one draws from a variety of sources in reaction to literature.

Intertextuality

While Julia Kristeva is credited with coining the term “intertextuality”, it is a construct heavily rooted in the work of Bakhtin (1978). Kristeva was a French semiotician influenced by Saussure’s linguistics and Bakhtin’s dialogism. Bakhtin (1978) described Saussurean linguistics as abstract objectivism that disregarded how language is utilized by individuals in specific social contexts. He viewed the relational nature of words not as a generalized and abstract system as Saussure, rather from specific social contexts, with specific social sites, social registers, and moments of utterance and reception. He recognized the human dimension and socially specific aspects of language, and felt that there was no real moment in time when a synchronic system of language could be constructed because language is always in a “ceaseless flow of becoming”. Bakhtin (1978) noted that dialogism and double-voiced discourse is a constitutive element of all language. His ideas of dialogism suggested that human consciousness, subjectivity and communication are based in language with ongoing clashes in opinions, ideologies, and worldviews. Further, the notion of double-voiced discourse comes from Bakhtin’s assertion that when we appropriate words, they become partly ours and partly someone else’s. He used the term “heteroglossia” to describe this idea of “other tongues” and the notion that language may contain many voices in addition to one’s own. He argued that in language at least two voices or viewpoints are being expressed, the “official” and the “unofficial”, the former referring to dominant society, and the latter referring to “carnival” or the underground side of society.

Language, too, changes with time in that it represents social ideologies that conflict from the past to the present. When discussing literature, Bakhtin (1981) described a polyphonic novel as serving two speakers at the same time and expressing simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. Bakhtin (1981) noted, “in such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions” (p. 324). Kristeva (1980) was influenced by both Saussure and Bakhtin and noted that a text is a “permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (p. 36). She conceptualized a vertical and horizontal dimension for intertextuality, the vertical being the complete, or synchronic body of literature (Saussure), and the horizontal being the addressee, or the subject of the writing (Bakhtin). Kristeva’s (1980) theory asserted that all texts are intertextual, and each text presupposes other texts.

Barthes (1975) further noted that reading and writing are inherently acts of intertextuality and the author’s and reader’s selves cease to be stable, and are dissolved. Bloom (1975) also observed that there are no texts, only relationships between texts. While intertextual theory brought to light the notion that literary texts are all related and there can be more than one interpretation, the focus was still on the literary work itself. Researchers have broadened the view of intertextuality from literary theory to educational studies and explored the resulting implications for instruction.

Intertextuality and the Reader. Researchers have explored intertextuality as a means to glean insight into the cognitive processes students use as they create links to comprehend what they have read as well as to develop an understanding of, and a schema for genre and literary elements, such as character, plot, and theme. Studies have been conducted with older children and fewer with young, emergent readers. Studies with older students more often involved silent reading and think-aloud experiences, and interviewing with individual students, while the work with younger students involved teacher led read-aloud episodes and recording whole class discussions to explore intertextual links.

In a two-part study on adolescents' use of intertextuality, Beach, Appleman and Dorsey (1994) analyzed students' use of intertextual links to understand literary elements. The purpose of their first study included examining the relationship between the level of readers' response to a current text and a past text, and examining the influence of individual differences in background leisure-reading experiences and prior knowledge of literature on the ability to define intertextual links. In this study, 119 eighth grade students read a short story and followed a guided response form. In the guided response, they were told to freewrite about one or more characters and engage in mapping activities that related the current literary text to one they had previously read. Mapping was viewed as a way to gain access into the cognitive construction of these students. One aspect of this study focused on the influence of individual differences in background leisure reading experiences and prior knowledge of

literature on the ability to define intertextual links. Most of the eighth graders in this study devoted little, if any, of their leisure time to reading and Beach, et al. (1994) indicated that the amount of leisure-time reading was a significant predictor of the ability to make intertextual links.

In the second study, Beach, et al. (1994) examined adolescents' uses of intertextual links by interviewing 20 high school juniors who were enrolled in the same college preparatory English class. The purpose of the study was to determine differences in students' abilities to use intertextual links to interpret texts. The students were asked a series of questions about a group of core works that had been assigned and taught in class and could draw on the same potential pool of literature for making connections. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that the students were consistently more likely to recall certain texts than others, perhaps due to the difficulty of the text. More able students tended to define links in terms of specific themes, compared form and genre between texts, and were more likely to simultaneously consider a multiplicity of factors in discussions of texts, and were more socially confident about exploring links with the interviewer. The less able students tended to make more intertextual links between character traits and plot. The links they made in relation to theme were less specific and broadly structured (e.g. "love" or "death"). These less able students moved methodically in their discussions (first plot, then character, etc.), and had less interaction with the interviewer. The authors suggested that some students developed more proficient strategies for defining links than other students due to differences in prior reading and classroom experiences. They

also suggested that in addition to the amount of leisure reading, learning to define intertextual links is a learned discourse practice that contributes to understanding texts. These studies contributed to the understanding of the importance of the active engagement of the individual reader in developing literary knowledge, and using their prior reading experiences as a foundation for further understanding. A limitation of these studies was the fact they were done in a controlled setting one-on-one with an interviewer and not in the context of classroom learning experiences. The way intertextuality manifests itself may be different in such a setting than when given a task to do by a researcher.

Hartman (1995) analyzed eight proficient readers (high school juniors and seniors) in individual sessions and used think-a-loud data to gain access to on-line cognitive processes of readers making connections across text sets. He met with each student alone for one 2½ to 3 hour session over a three-week period. During a practice period, the students were given a written explanation of the task and practiced thinking aloud while reading silently. Next, the students thought aloud while reading five thematically-related short stories. Then, they responded verbally to prompting questions about what they read. Finally, they completed a debriefing interview. The think aloud data was analyzed through a unit created by Hartman (1995) called a “think aloud utterance” which comprised of words spoken aloud by a student that were preceded and followed by a period of silence. He found different locations of textual resources: primary endogenous, secondary endogenous, and exogenous. Basically, primary endogenous is a resource located within the text; secondary

endogenous is linked to a previous text read; and exogenous is located outside the task at hand. He found that the students in his study took three stances, logocentric, intertextual, and resistant. A logocentric stance assumed that meaning is in the text, created by the author. An intertextual stance assumed that text is open to multiple interpretations. Finally, a resistant stance was taken when one asserted his/her own meaning over all other possibilities (Hartman, 1995). He asserted that reading comprehension appears to be more than finding and activating schema, then filling in the slots. The participants in his study purposefully manipulated their knowledge in situation-specific configurations, formulated signifieds as they encountered textual signs, and transposed, absorbed and intersected texts. Intertextuality, then, is a key part of comprehension in that students make sense of written texts, not in isolation, but in reference to their previous reading experiences. He contended that the readers were strategic in their linking, and that previous models of expert readers have been too simplistic. He further noted that prior knowledge is something that is used and constructed and reconstructed during reading and not simply something readers bring with them (Hartman, 1995). The limitations of this study included the small number of students and that they were all proficient, successful readers. He noted that more students and a variety of reading proficiencies would likely lead to a more generalizable and comprehensive understanding of the mental processes involved, although it would be more difficult to obtain thinkaloud data from less-proficient readers. Another limitation is that the students read a five-passage set in a single sitting, selected

by the researcher, who instructed the students what to do with the task. Classrooms are less controlled, and are constructed and negotiated by the teacher and the children. The work with adolescents has been useful in recognizing intertextuality as a strategy for students to become more sophisticated readers as they build understanding from one text read to the next. Researchers have also recently begun to study intertextuality with younger children who have less experience with different literature and texts.

Sipe (2000, 2001) described the intertextual connections made by young children in several primary classrooms with the purpose of identifying what the connections to other texts allowed them to do in terms of interpretation and how the connections developed their literary understanding. He had collected data from 45 storybook read-aloud discussions, and his analysis revealed that ten percent of 4,154 conversational turns by the children were intertextual connections. He suggested that intertextual connections, defined in his study as linking texts with other texts read, made by young children are one of five aspects of literary understanding. Using the 45 previously collected readaloud transcripts, and five transcripts from other school sites, Sipe (2000) and four graduate students engaged in conceptual analysis to investigate what a variety of children do with intertextual connections, and to form a tentative conceptual framework for a more formal study. He found that the two major purposes for their connections were hermeneutic (interpretive) purposes and aesthetic (creative) purposes. Hermeneutic purposes included children using intertextual connections to interpret or analyze the story, and using intertextual connections

to make generalizations about genre and story structure. Aesthetic purposes included children using intertextual connections to enter the book through play and performance, and using intertextual connections to create new stories by joining and linking stories together. The hermeneutic and aesthetic purposes he described for intertextual connections seem to be consistent with Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory and the overarching purposes of reading for pleasure (aesthetic) or for information (efferent). This study demonstrated what the intertextual links allowed students to do in terms of interpretation, but did not consider who was making the connections, and was limited to talk during storybook readaloud situations.

Sipe (2001) then studied the ways in which children in a combined first and second grade urban classroom used intertextual links. His purpose was to describe ways in which the children used intertextual links to interpret stories as several variants of *Rapunzel* were read to them. As the readings progressed, the students' responses became more sophisticated and they moved from understanding the story through personal associations, to understanding the similarities and differences between stories, to testing schemata, to consolidating what they had learned into a solid schema, and then applying this knowledge to a variant that challenged their schema, and finally suggesting their own variants. The connections made by the children included personal connections (recognition, empathy/personal critique), text-to-text connections (language, story, and illustrations), analytic connections (plot, characters, setting) and schema building which included an analysis and synthesis of the variants.

While Sipe (2001) created a conceptual schema for reading fairy tales, this study was again limited to talk during teacher read-alouds and did not focus on the kinds of intertextual links children use across different literacy experiences, including opportunities to read on their own or in small group literature discussions.

Reading and writing connection. In addition to exploring intertextuality as located in the reader as a means of comprehension and developing literary knowledge, researchers have explored the intertextual connections students make between literature they read and their own writing. Cairney (1990) examined children's awareness of the influence of previous textual experiences on their current reading and writing practices. He interviewed eighty grade six children to examine what intertextual links they were able to articulate and if the links differed for high- and low-ability readers. He used teacher ratings of reading ability that included "above average", "average", and "below average" and selected 40 below average and 40 above average readers for the study. He told the students that his aim was to find out their opinions on some aspects of reading and writing. He found that 90% of the students in his study were aware of intertextual links, and 10% were unable to recall specific links. He then found seven different types of links and a recurring pattern in the way readers link texts as such: use of genre, use of character or strong characterization, use of specific ideas without copying plot; copying the plot with different ideas/events; transferring content from expository to narrative; and creating a narrative out of a number of other narratives (Cairney, 1990). He found that

the majority of the links for the groups were at the level of ideas and plot, with little awareness of genre and characterization. His study suggested that some students do consciously link literary texts based on content and were aware that what they have read influenced their writing. His data were collected through interviews, but actual samples of the students' writing to clarify and reinforce the categories generated by Cairney (1990) were not included in the study. Evidence of intertextual links in the students' actual writing samples are necessary to make the conclusions that the majority of the links made for the groups of students were at the level of ideas and plot. Genre and characterization may be evident, although not articulated, by students when they write.

Cairney (1992) also conducted a case study of a grade-one classroom in a small school in Australia. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of texts that make up intertextual histories and to determine if, and how children draw upon them in their writing. Cairney (1992) visited the classroom of a teacher he had visited over a three-year period, and began spending time during language arts for one and one-half hours per week to observe readers and writers in a natural setting. He kept field notes, conducted unstructured and structured interviews with the teacher and her students, and collected artifacts from the students. The teacher in the study read books by Enid Blyton: *The Enchanted Wood*, and *The Magic Faraway Tree* in the first four weeks of school and *Adventures of the Wishing Chair* for two weeks two months after the first two were read. Based on classroom observations, Cairney

(1992) suggested that young children's writing is influenced in a complex way by texts that have been read to them. The students began writing Blyton-type stories and engaged in various letter-writing activities as characters from the story. Cairney (1992) suggested that the teacher's reading of those books strongly influenced the writing of the children in the classroom. He based this assertion on the number of Blyton-related stories written during the school year. It was not clear if these stories were assignments; rather it seems that students wrote these kinds of Blyton stories and notes during a workshop or free writing time. The author noted that some students started a story and then abandoned it, and that others had over 20 pages written by the end of the year. Also, the fact some wrote a great deal, does not address the quality of their stories, or how their intertextual linking helped them become proficient and/or strategic writers.

Bearse (1992) examined the intertextual connections between reading and children's writing. The purpose of her study was to determine if children become aware of the potential connections between what they read and what they write, and how they learn to read like writers and use their observations from reading to make choices in their writing. She visited a third grade class in a Massachusetts suburb twice a week for six weeks and engaged in a fairy tale unit with the students. She began with a semantic mapping activity to tap prior knowledge about fairy tales. Then, over the course of the study, the students read approximately twelve different fairy tales. The students were asked to compare and contrast the fairy tales they read and heard. They compared illustrations, characters, settings, plot, and endings. Four weeks into the study,

the students were asked to write their own fairy tales. After they had written their fairy tales, the students were asked about their writing through a questionnaire, and their writing was also examined for fairy tale elements and book language. The students were asked if they thought of specific stories when they wrote their fairy tales and to give an example; what details in their stories were like other stories they remembered; if their characters were like other characters they had read about; and if their stories ended like it in any way. She found that 61% of the students said they had made conscious connections to stories they had read, but only seven could cite specific stories. Through analysis of their writing, Bearse (1992) concluded that students had internalized the literary characteristics of fairy tales including rhythm, cadence and phrasing, even students who might be identified as low-ability. The high-ability students in her study tended to make conscious connections, while low-ability students made unconscious connections. She described the unconscious connections as the connections not explicitly articulated by the students between the connections from the fairy tales they read to the one's they wrote. Bearse (1992) pointed out specific connections from the texts to the students throughout the study that may have influenced the students into using those connections in their fairy tale writing. Bearse (1992) however surmised that students unconsciously stored away the rhythm and cadence of fairy tale language into their repertoire of literary knowledge, because these were elements she did not explicitly address to her students.

Spivey and King (1994) studied how developmental differences might be manifested across three grade levels during five-year periods in students' schooling and to see how students of different reading abilities at those grade levels make use of sources to write their own informational texts. They focused on textual evidence of selecting, organizing, and connecting as well as on the overall quality of the text. The participants in the study were 60 students in the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades. There were 20 students from each grade level, ten identified as accomplished readers for their grade level, and ten were less accomplished readers, based on scores from the Reading Comprehension Subtest of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. The students read three source texts on the topic of "Rodeos". The students wrote reports over three consecutive days in the students' English or language arts classes. On the first day, the students wrote any ideas or information they could think about associated with the word "rodeo". The lists were collected and were used to screen students' prior knowledge of the topic. Then, the students received their assignment and the three source texts, and paper. The students were asked to write a report about the rodeo to inform adults and teenagers in their community who were new and did not know too much about rodeos. After writing their ideas on the first day, the students then worked independently on the task for the remainder of the class period. For the next two days in class, they continued writing their reports, using materials from the first day. They completed a final version by the end of class on the third day. All drafts were collected for analysis and records were kept of the amount of time spent each day and the

total time each student devoted to the report. One finding was the difference in students' selection of content from the sources. The older students produced texts with more content and were also more likely to include the most important information, defined in terms of repetition across texts. Students in all grades tended to include larger proportions of intertextually important information and the gains were most obvious between the eighth and tenth grades. The tenth grade students appeared to be more sensitive to intertextual importance than the younger students. They were more likely to include content that was present in all three sources. When questioned about how they decided what to include when they wrote, they noted that if something was repeated in several articles it was obviously important (Spivey & King, 1994). The authors noted that some of the older students were possibly better able to select what was important in the content domain without using intertextual cues as the content repeated across texts tended to be key information about the event structure of the rodeo.

The previous studies indicated that intertextual connections are evident in the way readers respond to text and can be a bridge between what students read and what they write. The social context of any reading experience is an important factor into how one interprets the purpose of the reading as well as the kinds of connections one may make.

Sociocultural Learning

Intertextuality, from a transactional perspective, plays a major role in how students construct meaning from text as they engage with and live through a written text. While intertextuality includes drawing on past written texts and

personal experiences to interpret and respond to a current text, intertextuality also encompasses making connections within a particular sociocultural context, or a discourse community. Leistyna, Woodrum, & Sherblom (1996) noted that a discourse represents the ways reality is perceived and created through language, complex signs, facial gestures, and practices. Vygotsky (1978) described learning as proceeding from an inter-psychological plane (between people) to an intra-psychological plane (within a person) and that idea is consistent with the notion of intertextuality in classroom learning experiences as students transpose and relate various texts to create meaning. A sociocultural approach to learning recognizes that higher mental functioning in individuals derive from social life, is mediated by signs, and is situational in a particular context, whether in an historical, cultural, or institutional setting (Wertsch, 1991). Vygotsky (1978) focused on the sociocultural setting and how intra-psychological functioning emerges in institutionally-situated activities, particularly with how forms of speaking in formal schooling provide the framework for concept development. The discourse practices of a community both build systems of texts related in particular ways and establish the recognized kinds of relationships there may be between texts or the discourses of different occasions (Lemke, 1992). The discourse of different occasions, then, includes one's experiences outside the context of the classroom and can be an intertextual resource for learning within the classroom. Rosenblatt (1978) also noted that responses to texts are not limited to transactions between a reader and a text. She recognized that transactions can occur as a result of discussion among readers and the text can

be viewed as a medium for communication between readers. In this view, the classroom can be a powerful catalyst for intertextual meaning making between participants who have some intersubjectivity as classmates, as children, as members of the local community and the broader American culture, for example, but who also have differing backgrounds and experiences from which to draw links and to help clarify understandings. In a review on reader response research, Galda and Beach (2001) noted that the 1990's brought a redefinition of reader response in sociocultural terms. The implication is that students learn to respond to literature as they acquire various social practices, identities, and tools through participation in interpretive communities and acquiring social practices within specific cultural worlds.

In a study of eleven- and twelve-year old students in Scotland, Many (1996) explored students' ability to make intertextual connections. The purpose of the study was to explore the different ways in which students drew on sources to construct understandings of oral and written texts. Many (1996) acted as a participant observer taking extensive field notes on classroom experiences and conducted structured and unstructured interviews with the students and the teacher. During a 12-week unit on World War II, the students were debriefed daily regarding their research projects. Other data included transcripts of audio or video taped small group discussions, photocopies of research projects, source texts, and historical fictional stories. Many found that different intertextual connections depended on the mode of discourse and the functional context of discourse in terms of the types of sources to which connections were made and

the relevance of the connections. From an aesthetic stance, students used intertextual associations to create, relate to, verify, and understand imaginary worlds. However, when discussing or writing about informational topics, the students had difficulty using intertextual connections and focused efferently on public, verifiable information. These students had difficulties in selecting from their associations that which was relevant to the conversational focus and in verifying the accuracy of information. They were less willing to make connections that dealt with facts, lest they be incorrect with their connections. Many (1996) suggested that teachers may need to increase students' ability and metacognitive awareness of the need to assess the validity or accuracy of information being discussed and make explicit the appropriate stance which underlies classroom discussion of informational topics, and give detailed feedback during such discourse in order to aid students in critically evaluating the intertextual connections made. The students in this study provided line-by-line descriptions of where they got their ideas for their stories to provide accuracy in events and settings. The students had to research sources to accurately depict the time period of World War II, including the emotional responses of real people in order to write a fictionalized account of their own. Intertextual connections became an important impetus for writing when students got stuck, and they turned to historical fiction books as a template.

Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) viewed intertextuality as a social construction and examined how this view contributes to an understanding of reading and writing events in the classroom. The purpose of their

microethnographic analysis was to provide an illustration of how the heuristic of the social construction of intertextuality might be used to help describe what is happening during classroom reading and writing events. They conducted a microanalysis of one 15-minute lesson in a first-grade classroom and the social interactions of three students as they engaged in the discussion of texts they have read. The lesson involved a teacher-led discussion of a story the class had read previously. They focused on three students, and their analysis was based on videotape made after two months of participant-observation in the classroom for several mornings each week. The researcher acted as an aide in the classroom and helped the students with their work. A transcript was made showing the interactions among three students, and teacher-class interactions occurring as separate and parallel. Their analysis presented an example of how intertextuality can be located in the material of people's social interactions and how intertextual relationships are constructed by people as part of how they act and react to each other. They noted that intertextuality can be located in the social interactions of people and that once an intertextual link is proposed, it must be acknowledged and have social significance in order to be meaningful. In addition to the language cueing systems, Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) discussed the importance of contextualization cues. Contextualization cues include participants' understanding of the social context of events, what has already happened, what is anticipated to happen, and can include posturing, intonation, and other non-verbal signals. Further, they noted that identifying a contextualization cue does not inherently provide an understanding of a

speaker's intention or a listener's interpretation. They further concluded that teachers and students may use intertextuality to define themselves and each other as readers and as students; to form social groups; to identify and validate previous events as sources of knowledge; and to construct, maintain, and contest the cultural ideology of the simultaneously occurring teacher-class and peer-peer events. The authors asserted that it was useful to broaden understanding of intertextuality by illustrating one way in which intertextuality can be located in the material of people's social interactions and how that social construction of intertextuality could add to the interpretation of a literacy event. While this study was a brief analysis of fifteen minutes of interaction, it highlighted that social interaction is tangible in that it can be seen and heard, and can affect how students choose to create links. This study was one of the first to broaden the concept of intertextuality as a social phenomenon as well as an individual cognitive construction. How students respond and react to what is read is an important factor in making intertextual links within a discourse community.

Villume and Hopkins (1995) brought together a transactional theory of reader response and a sociocultural view of learning when examining the ways fourth graders responded in literature discussion groups. The questions guiding the study were: What types of transactions between text and personal knowledge and experiences appear in the literature discussions of elementary students? How does social dialogue about literature impact on personal response? The participants were five fourth grade students in a literature discussion group and a reading specialist. The students were heterogeneously

grouped, with the members described as racially mixed, with two above-average students, one average student, and a low-average student and a low student. The discussion group met weekly for approximately 25 minutes, and data were collected over a ten-week period. Each student was to come prepared by reading about half of the book and writing personal responses to their readings in their literature response logs. The literature discussions consisted of them sharing their entries. Data collection and analysis included focusing on two videotaped discussions from week five and week eight of the literature groups, as well as audio taping the weekly discussions, taking field notes of actual discussions and the researchers dialogue (the reading specialist). The authors wanted to identify points in the discussions when participants made transactions. They developed a coding scheme to signify a move when a participant initiated a transaction between text worlds, personal worlds, improvised worlds, and related text worlds. Text world were responses focusing on evoking details of the book; Personal world represented responses in which students related personal experiences, offered personal knowledge or made judgments; Improvised world represented responses in which students replaced characters with themselves or transferred text events to their personal lives; and Related text world represented responses in which students referred to other books they had read or movies they had seen. Villaume and Hopkins (1995) found that each discussion represented a student-centered approach as three students initiated moves among different worlds more often than the teacher did. The authors suggested that their study illustrated that social encounters with

literature affect personal response. Further, they noted that one student in particular was impacted by observing how the others responded and she then assumed a more active role in discussions. Analysis of the first discussion revealed that students mostly initiated moves related to personal worlds, and none to related text worlds. The second discussion was more evenly distributed among the text, personal, and improvised “worlds”, but moves to Related Text Worlds was only initiated 2% of the total responses. The authors’ description of “related text worlds” is similar to making intertextual connections between texts. This is something that the students most often did not do during their discussions. This study illustrated that students are capable of engaging in effective student-centered discussions about books and personal responses can be influenced by social dialogue.

In an effort to address the processes students use as they read and write from fiction and non-fiction texts, Many (2002) focused on instructional scaffolding that occurred during literature and inter-disciplinary unit class experiences. The students discussed texts in one-on-one, small-group, and whole-class situations. The participants in the study were the teachers and students in a combined third-fourth grade and a fifth-sixth grade class. Many acted as a participant-observer and collected data twice weekly for a year during literature circles and social studies interdisciplinary instruction. She collected field notes and interviewed the students. Many (2002) found that teachers and peers scaffolded students’ understanding of concepts through constructing meaning from texts, through personal cognitive analysis, and through

consideration of symbolic representations of concepts through art. The social context allowed the teachers and the more able peers to scaffold students' use of strategies and to learn independently and in group situations. This study illustrated how the members of the classroom community constructed meanings and understandings in terms of how they operate together to complete tasks as well as how they internalize concepts from the social context.

Intertextuality was derived from literary theory and now has developed into an important construct in literacy research to help uncover assumed meanings of the text, the reader, the author and the context that contribute to our understanding of literacy development and learning (Hartman, 1992). While the notion of intertextuality is an important construct in literacy development and encompasses readers' responses to literature, there are fewer studies on intertextuality with young students, and few that address the connections made in the context of classroom experiences. Again, this is a critical time for literacy learners who are becoming more proficient in learning not only how to read, (learning language) but also reading to learn through content areas (learning through language) that will be expected of them not only as they continue their schooling, but also as they grow as literate citizens.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This study was a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry into intertextuality in the context of classroom experiences. The questions addressed were: What kinds of intertextual links do children make during classroom reading experiences? What links are acknowledged? What links are disregarded? Why are they disregarded? A qualitative approach was an appropriate way to address these questions as I was looking for a description of the reading experiences, what intertextual links the children made, and how the children were internalizing the experiences. Rosenblatt (1981) noted that utilizing an ethnographic approach similar to that of an anthropologist or sociologist seemed to be especially congenial to research involving the transactional view of literature and language. This approach includes taking descriptive field notes and recorded and transcribed interviews which provide the basis for explicit descriptions organized in terms of observed recurring patterns (Rosenblatt, 1981). Rosenblatt (1981) further noted that ethnographic methods can be applied fruitfully to the study of classroom dynamics because teachers and students are engaged in a collaborative process and build perspectives as they proceed.

Recruiting Procedures

The study was conducted with a second-grade class at Bradley Elementary and their teacher, Mrs. Ryan (all names for places and people are pseudonyms). I chose her classroom because I had known her for several years

both as a classmate during graduate school and when I served as a university supervisor for field students placed in her classroom. We had a similar educational background and philosophy on teaching and learning, and I felt her approach to teaching would encourage active learning and interaction with the students and would be an environment conducive to facilitating intertextual links. I explained the study to her and asked if she would be willing to have her students be part of my research study as well as participating herself. She agreed without reservation and was very helpful in suggesting that I come to “Back to School Night” to meet the parents and explain the study to them. Mrs. Ryan discussed the curriculum with me, and explained that they had strong parental support and thought the parents would be very receptive to having their children participate in the study. Mrs. Ryan was a recently married White woman in her early thirties. She had a Master’s degree in elementary education, and had recently received her National Board certification. She had been teaching at Bradley Elementary for her entire teaching career of nine years.

After Mrs. Ryan agreed to the study, I met with the school principal. I explained the study to him and he was agreeable to having me conduct the research study in the school. After receiving approval from all necessary parties, I visited Mrs. Ryan’s classroom on “Back to School Night”, explained the study to the parents, and gave them a letter and an informed permission document to complete (see appendix). Mrs. Ryan also signed a consent form to participate in the study. I received eighteen signed permission forms from parents agreeing to their child’s participation in the study. One child was

excluded from the study due to his special education status. The week following receipt of the consent forms, I went to the classroom, introduced myself to the students, and described the study to them. I then took the children with parental permission in groups of three or four to the library to have them complete a student assent form agreeing to participate in the study (see appendix). From those eighteen students, two chose not to participate. I spent the next week observing reading experiences and getting familiar with the students and the class environment. At the end of the week, I interviewed Mrs. Ryan to choose six focal children for the study. Using a class list of those with parental permission and student assent, Ms. Ryan indicated students' reading achievement based on Development Reading Assessments and other previous assessments. I wanted to include students who were below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level in reading to find out if reading proficiency was a factor in the kinds of links they made. I also wanted to find out if gender played a role in the links they made. I initially wanted to have three boys and three girls participate, however, the only girl who was identified as a below-level reader was the one for whom I did not receive a consent form from her parents. Therefore, I chose a boy and a girl who were identified as above-level readers, a boy and a girl who were identified as on-level readers, and two boys who were identified as below-level readers. While the other students with parental permission and student assent would be considered participants in the study, these six students were the ones who I would interview and observe closely during reading experiences.

School Site

Bradley Elementary was located less than a mile from a university campus in a mostly middle-class suburban neighborhood in a moderately-sized city in a southwestern state. The school district had 12,596 students in 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, and two high schools. Bradley Elementary had a total of 298 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. There was an average of 21 students in each classroom. The ethnic breakdown for the school was 88% White, 6% Hispanic, 4% African American, and 2% Asian American or Native American. The students came from mostly middle-class backgrounds, some from lower socioeconomic situations. Bradley Elementary did not qualify for Title I funding.

Participants

Mrs. Ryan and her second-grade students were participants in this study. There were eleven boys and ten girls in the class. The majority of the children were white (17); one boy was racially mixed; two children were Hispanic; and one girl was Asian American. The focal children mentioned previously were two above-level readers, two on-level readers, and two below-level readers.

Ellen was an Asian American girl who was seven and a half years old. Ellen spoke English as a second language. Korean was her primary language, and Mrs. Ryan believed she may have been born in Korea. Ellen was identified as an above-level reader. Ellen seemed at ease in the classroom, often putting her feet up and eating snacks as she read independently. However, she did not seem to interact with others that often. She told me she liked to hear picture

books when she was little, but not any more because she felt she was “too old for that”. She told me she enjoyed Harry Potter books and collected CD’s of her favorite musical artists.

Ned was a White boy who was eight years old. He was identified as an above-level reader. He often helped his classmates with their work or with their reading. He was soft spoken and seemed to get along well with the other children. Ned told me he started reading Goosebumps books at home and preferred those books to the ones read in class. He also liked listening to the band N’Sync.

Beth was a White girl who was seven and a half years old. She was identified as an on-level reader. Beth took her schoolwork seriously and was conscientious about doing assigned tasks thoroughly. She was quiet in the classroom and had a kind demeanor. She told me she loved to be read to by her dad, particularly Hank the Cowdog books.

Oscar was a White boy who was eight years old. He was identified as an on-level reader. Oscar had several friends in the class and had a pleasant personality. He seemed to enjoy being in the class and talking to those around him. He told me he enjoyed reading Goosebumps and Dav Pilkey books at home, in particular Pilkey’s Captain Underpants series.

Roger was a White boy who was seven and a half years old. He was identified as a below-level reader. Roger seemed to enjoy listening to stories when Mrs. Ryan read, but struggled when it came to reading chapter books and some picture books independently. He had an outgoing personality, and enjoyed

hunting and fishing. Roger also told me he enjoyed reading Harry Potter books. It became apparent later in the study that Roger could not actually read Harry Potter books independently yet.

Alan was a Hispanic boy who was seven years old. He was identified as a below-level reader. Alan was a talkative and cheerful boy with a lot of energy. He would get distracted in class at times and begin to act silly, talk “baby talk”, and make noises. The others would seem to take care of him and help him finish his work, and reprimand him to get back on task. Alan told me he enjoyed reading Harry Potter books and would have contests with his sister to finish reading the books first. Alan, like Roger, had difficulty reading books independently, so it was clear that he could not yet read Harry Potter books on his own.

Classroom Context

Mrs. Ryan believed that children are active learners and engaged the students in hands-on activities. She had many books, math and language games, and writing and art supplies available for students’ use. The classroom walls were covered with students’ art work and writing as well as with posters of Arthur and other storybook characters. The students’ work was also on display on the walls outside of the classroom. For the first several weeks, the desks were arranged in three groups of five students and one group of six students. For the following weeks, the desks were arranged in two long groups. One group had ten students, with five desks on each side facing each other. The

other group had eleven students, five on each side facing each other with one desk at the head of the group.

Mrs. Ryan used trade books to teach reading, and used literature to teach social studies topics. She did not use a basal reading series at all during the study. On a typical day, Mrs. Ryan began the day with a message on the blackboard containing spelling and grammatical errors for the students to correct independently. Then, with Mrs. Ryan's guidance, volunteers would share their answers for the whole group. A student helper would also go over the calendar, noting the date and counting the days in the month. They then engaged in Spelling/Making words activities for thirty minutes. The students focused on a particular spelling pattern for the week and had a spelling test on Fridays. Next, the children engaged in math activities. The district had adopted a new math program and the teachers at Bradley Elementary were following it closely, as was Mrs. Ryan. After math time, the students went outside for a twenty to thirty minute recess. Next, they came back for reading. Mrs. Ryan structured her literacy program to include opportunities for her to read aloud to the children, for partner reading, individual reading, literature circles, and popcorn reading (these modes of reading are described in the data collection section). Mrs. Ryan often used class sets of trade books for reading experiences and used them to teach decoding strategies and vocabulary as well. Some activities used with trade books included finding short /i/ sounds in *The Three Little Pigs* booklet, syllabication of words found in *Nate the Great*, keeping track of "tricky" words that students had difficulty decoding, and direct instruction of vocabulary words

found in the books they read. Other activities included completing cloze activities, creating story maps, completing literature circle questions over literary elements and personal responses, and engaging in art projects. Social studies topics were addressed during reading time as well. For example, I observed class discussions and writing assignments about President's Day, Thanksgiving, Hanukah, and a Native American retelling of a folktale. After reading, the children went to lunch and recess. When they arrived back in the afternoon, they had music or physical education for about 50 minutes. When they came back, Mrs. Ryan focused on writing workshop for about thirty minutes. During that time, the children would work on an assignment related to a story they had read: for example, writing their own mystery, and she would help with the writing process. Then, for about 50 minutes in the afternoon for three days a week, Mrs. Ryan had "station time". During station time, the students worked in pairs and engaged in learning center activities that included math games, language games, jigsaw puzzles, science information, and art. Mrs. Ryan had developed a system that included folders for each station and a schedule for who would be working on a particular station during that time. One or two parent helpers came in and helped monitor and work with the children during station time. The children were spread around the room sitting in small groups on the floor or at desks during their station activity. While the rest of the class was working on a station activity, Mrs. Ryan sometimes worked with two to six children for guided reading based on developmental reading levels for about ten to fifteen minutes. Then, she would have them go back to

their station and called another group to read with her. Also during station time, a volunteer reading tutor from the community came and worked with children who needed extra help in reading. He would take one or two children to the library and read with them a book given by Mrs. Ryan. He mostly worked with focal children Roger and Alan, and a female student. For two days a week during this time, the students went to the computer lab located directly across the hall. There the students worked with math and language programs on the computer. Mrs. Ryan would use the remaining thirty minutes or so in the afternoon to have the children engage in art projects or finish math or reading assignments as needed.

Data Sources and Collection

The data sources included a sociogram conducted with the six focal children, field notes of my observations of classroom reading experiences, and interviews with the six focal children. By conducting multiple direct observations and interviews, the data were triangulated and helped me seek a convergence of the results (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and gain a better sense of the intertextual links the children were making and why some links were disregarded.

By collecting field notes and conducting individual interviews, I was able to document instances of intertextual linking through class discussions and also gain insight into the students' intertextual linking that was not observable or verbalized during the classroom experience. Information from these data sources addressed the question, "What kinds of intertextual links do children

make during classroom reading experiences?” The sociogram, field notes, and interviews also helped to address the possible influence of peers during classroom experiences as well as to document instances of students’ interactions with others. These sources also helped me to gain insight into students’ perceptions of what peers said or did during the reading experiences, addressing the question, “What links are acknowledged, and therefore contribute to the meaning-making process?” As well as the question, “What links were disregarded and why?”

This study was conducted in the Fall, 2004 semester at the beginning of the school year. I collected data from September through December for a total of thirteen weeks. There were several school holidays during the semester that shortened the weeks, including Fall Break (one week with three days, the next week with four days) and Thanksgiving (a two-day week). For the first week, I observed Ms. Ryan’s class, got acquainted with the students, and became familiar with the class routine. At the beginning of the second week, I began data collection by administering the sociogram questionnaire with the six focal students.

Sociogram

The sociogram was used as a data source to gain insight into the social and academic relationships the focal children had with their classmates and to gain insight into possibilities why some links made by their peers would be disregarded. As I was essentially looking at classroom dynamics when trying to address what links peers acknowledged or not, I devised a sociogram

questionnaire for the six focal children to complete. The first three questions on the questionnaire addressed perceptions of social and popularity issues and the last two questions addressed academic issues. The fourth question addressed students who may be marginalized in the class (see appendix).

I took two students at a time to the library to complete the questionnaire. I read each question aloud as the students followed along and wrote their responses. I emphasized that they would not share their answers with anyone, and that I would not share their answers with anyone, either. This was conducted again with the focal students after six weeks to document any shifts in perception.

Field notes

As I observed the reading experiences, I collected descriptive field notes. Descriptive field notes were taken to be used as a data source to document the context of the reading experiences and instances of intertextual linking made during those experiences. My field notes were dated and outlined according to the reading activity I observed, and were focused on the six focal children. The field notes were taken in a descriptive way, noting the time as well as a general context of the experience and the activities with which the students were engaged, and how they were approaching classroom activities and tasks. As a participant-observer, I documented the behaviors of the focal students in the natural context of their classroom (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). These observations were used to obtain information regarding observed behaviors that I could later analyze to gain insight about the focal students'

perception and viewpoints of the experiences. The number of focal children I observed was dependent upon the activity in which they were engaged. For example, during whole class activities such as teacher readalouds, popcorn reading and whole class discussions, I would describe the context of the experience, and then document the time, and any connections the students or Mrs. Ryan made with the story. During partner reading experiences, I would sit with a focal child and his/her partner as I documented the experience (sometimes the pairing would both be focal children). During independent reading, I again would note the time and document the behaviors of the focal children as they read independently. During guided reading, I observed the group that Mrs. Ryan was working with that included focal children and documented their behaviors and responses to the book. I observed Mrs. Ryan's classroom reading experiences for four to five days a week for the next twelve weeks and collected descriptive field notes using a laptop computer as well as taking written notes. Throughout the course of the study, the students read and/or completed assignments based on the following books: *Corduroy*, *Henry and Mudge*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, five to ten selections from the Nate the Great book series, three to five selections from the Cam Jansen book series, five to ten selections from Arthur picture books and chapter books, and three to five selections from the Horrible Harry series. With the series books, there were some books that all students read, some books that only a few were reading in literature circles, and some that the students chose to read. Some students, then, read more books than others.

Other books that were read during this time included holiday books about Thanksgiving, Hanukah, and Christmas.

I collected data on a total of 45 classroom reading experiences, eight of which corresponded to topics in social studies. The modes of reading for these experiences were teacher readalouds, partner reading, independent reading, popcorn reading, literature circles, and guided reading. Mrs. Ryan mostly practiced teacher readalouds, partner reading and independent reading during the study, but at times she incorporated literature circles and popcorn reading, and conducted guided reading groups on occasion.

Types of Reading Experiences. A teacher readaloud experience occurred when the whole class was engaged in listening to Mrs. Ryan read to them. Usually, Mrs. Ryan would sit on a stool, and the students would sit on a carpet facing her. As Mrs. Ryan read to the class, she would periodically stop and ask comprehension questions. Mrs. Ryan would then lead the class in a discussion after reading.

Partner reading consisted of two students reading one book together. The partners would sit anywhere they liked, such as, on the floor, at desks, or anywhere they felt comfortable. Usually, the students were instructed to have one partner read the first page aloud, and then the other partner would read the second page. This process would continue with each student reading alternate pages. Then, they would start over, and read the book again with one student beginning by reading the page their partner previously read. By doing this they, in effect, read the story twice.

During independent reading, the students would read silently and independently. They usually did this at their desks, but sometimes Mrs. Ryan would allow one or two students to sit on pillows or on the floor. The entire class was very quiet during this time. Independent Reading mainly involved chapter books from a series with which the whole class was working.

Popcorn reading occurred when the whole class would read the same book using their own individual copy. This was usually done with a chapter book. Popcorn reading began with Mrs. Ryan reading aloud, and then a volunteer would read aloud and others would follow along. Then, another volunteer would read and so on. Mrs. Ryan would stop the class periodically to ask comprehension questions and would lead the class in discussion about what they read.

Literature circles were when the class was separated into groups of children reading different books from the same series. For example, there would be four groups reading four different Nate the Great books. Each group would have five or six students. Literature circles were self-directed with one child taking the role as the leader, or were conducted under the supervision of Mrs. Ryan or a parent helper. The literature circle group members would take turns reading from their book and answer response questions about the book on individual worksheets.

Guided reading was when Mrs. Ryan would work with a group of children who were on the same reading level. They would sit at a table together while the rest of the class was completing station activities. Mrs. Ryan gave

them rubber toy fingers to put on their index finger to emphasize they needed to point to the words as they read. Mrs. Ryan would ask questions about the cover and the title before readings. Then, the students would take turns reading each page. Mrs. Ryan discussed particular vocabulary words with them and instructed them on decoding strategies. Following the reading, Mrs. Ryan asked comprehension questions about the story. Each student had a chance to answer a question about the story.

Along with incorporating mystery and realistic fiction books in her reading program, Mrs. Ryan used informational books and informational storybooks (a mixed genre of fiction and non-fiction) to help teach concepts in social studies. This included learning about Washington, D.C. and the White House, life for the Pilgrims, the first Thanksgiving, and Hanukkah. The reading modes for these experiences included teacher readalouds, partner reading, and independent reading.

Comprehension and Response Activities. After each reading experience, Mrs. Ryan usually had the children engage in activities to check for comprehension and to respond to what they read. These activities included answering worksheet questions about the characters, plot, and setting. For Cam Jansen books, the students completed a “scrapbook”, which was to illustrate what Cam saw on particular pages of the book. After reading the Three Little Pigs variants, the students engaged in a Venn Diagramming exercise to compare both books. Table 1 is a summary of reading experience observations.

Table 1: Reading Experience Observations

READING EXPERIENCES	NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS
Teacher readalouds	12
Partner reading	12
Independent reading	11
Popcorn reading	4
Literature circles	3
Guided reading	3

Interviews

After each observation, I interviewed one or two focal children individually. The interviews were semi-structured as I did not want to limit the type and amount of data I was collecting. A semi-structured interview allows the respondents to offer other information in terms of what is important to them (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I began by activating schema and getting the students focused on discussing the book and classroom experience. I began the interview

with questions such as, “Tell me about the book you read today.” In order to elicit a personal response and reaction, I would ask a question such as, “What is your favorite part of the book so far?”, and “How do you like the book?” After a few interviews, the children understood the routine that we would talk about whatever it was they read that day, or were reading that week. Then, I usually asked open-ended questions related to my field notes and the kinds of links I noted. Some examples were, “Did you agree with John when he said the pigs were being lazy?” or “Did you agree with Beth when she said the pigs didn’t know how to build their house the right way?” During this time, the focal students also discussed any assignment related to the book they were reading, brought their various written assignments to the interviews, and explained what they did. Although some students made intertextual connections without being directly asked to make them, some did not. Therefore, I asked structured, direct questions as well to elicit connections between books the student read, such as, “How are Nate the Great and Cam Jansen similar?”, or, “What are some things you expect to see in all Arthur books that you read?” I probed the students to talk about the experience of reading the texts and interacting with others to get information about the kinds of links they internalized and why they acknowledged links from others or not.

The interviews usually lasted about fifteen to twenty minutes, and I collected a total of sixty interviews from the focal children as follows: Ellen, 10; Ned, 10; Beth, 12; Oscar, 12; Roger, 11; and Alan, 5 interviews. Alan was identified to go to the reading lab shortly after I began the study and was often

not in class during reading time, and therefore I only collected five interviews with him. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed word for word by me.

Researcher's Role

My role during the study was that of a participant-observer. I observed and took descriptive field notes during my observations. I would interact with the students on occasion when approached by them. I sat by one or two focal children as they read and completed assignments. There were times when the students, and not only the focal students, would come and ask me to help decode a word or tell me something special that was going on in their lives. Three children who were not focal children at different times approached me and wanted to be interviewed. I realized that they didn't fully understand when I said I would be choosing only six people to interview through the semester. I did interview them, but did not include their interviews in my analysis because I just wanted to appease them. I became part of the classroom environment and developed a good rapport with the students. Having a good rapport with the students was particularly helpful during interviews as the children seemed comfortable talking to me.

As a researcher, I recognize that maintaining an objective stance as much as possible was necessary for an accurate and impartial interpretation of events. My bias as a researcher comes from my background as an elementary teacher, graduate student, and work with pre-service and public school teachers, and as a mother of elementary school-aged children. As a result of these experiences, I

was familiar with the elementary schools in the district both personally and professionally. I did not go into this study as a complete outsider studying a phenomenon as an ethnographer would study an unknown culture. Rather, I was part of the educational profession and had background knowledge and experiences. I support a social constructivist viewpoint of teaching and learning. That is, I believe that students are active learners who construct meaning and understanding based on their experiences as well as how they are supported and scaffolded by others. I see the teacher's role as one who provides experiences based on children's developmental levels and who promotes inquiry to stretch students' thinking, rather than acting as a dispenser of information. I recognize that my experiences and beliefs do play a part in how I might interpret various situations and information. On one hand, my background knowledge can help me relate what I find to support learning and reading theories, but on the other hand, I did not want to make any assumptions based on what I thought I should be seeing the teacher or the students do. To maintain objectivity, as much as one can, Strauss and Corbin (1998) outlined the need for gathering data on the same event in different ways through interviews and observations, and with a variety of people. That is how my data gathering was structured and conducted to keep my analysis grounded in the data that was collected.

Data Analysis

Sociogram

The sociogram was an analytic tool used to help determine the relationships in the class, and to help determine why some links would be acknowledged by

the students and some would not. Using the responses on the questionnaire, I tallied the number of times a student was selected by a focal child for each question. Then, I created a sociogram for each question. A sociogram is a bulls-eye target with the child or children who garner the most responses to a question in the center. Then, the next circle of the bulls-eye contains the names of the children with the next highest responses and so on, until the children with no responses were on the outside of the bulls-eye and furthest away from the target child or children. I created a sociogram twice for each question, as the questionnaire was conducted at the beginning and middle of the study to note any change in perception. Then, I looked at the sociogram data for target children for social and academic issues and compared them to get a sense of which children had high status, medium status, and low status in the classroom community based on the perceptions of the focal children. I ranked the students and divided the list into thirds based on the number of responses received. The top third of the students were perceived as high status, the middle third were perceived as average status, and the bottom third were perceived as low status students.

There was not a significant change from the first sociogram questions to the second. Based on the sociogram information, Hank, Jane, Tom, and Ned were perceived as high status students by the focal children. Jim, Barb, Sally, Josh, Oscar, Ed, Beth, Pete, Alan, Mary and Kelly had medium status. Peg, Dawn, Roger, Mark, Ellen, and Ross had the lowest status. According to the sociogram for question 4, Pete, Sally, Dawn, Kelly and Ellen, Beth and Mary

were mentioned most often as those with whom the focal children did not usually play at recess. Hank and Beth were the top two children in terms of who was perceived as the best reader in the class, albeit Beth named herself as the best reader. The second sociogram indicated that Oscar chose Ed as one person to be with in a reading group, and Alan indicated he was someone with whom he did not play. The focal students seemed to remember what Hank said during class discussions, and Hank was someone who seemed popular with the focal students. Hank was also the one student whom Mrs. Ryan chose to present his retelling of a Native American tale for the rest of the class.

Field notes and interviews

The field note data and interviews both were used to address the question of the kinds of intertextual links the students made during classroom reading experiences, so I analyzed them using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method is useful to analyze different data sources as well as to group answers to common questions from the interviews. In this study I had field note data as well as cross-case interview data from the six focal children to compare. I compared incidents applicable to intertextual links across the data sources, and then I integrated the categories and their properties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I began my analysis by reading through the field notes and made notes of the impressions I was getting from them through memoing. Then, I read the field notes again to isolate the instances of intertextual linking, defined as specific incidents of comparing, contrasting, or referring one text to another text (printed or otherwise) and coded them. To

begin analysis of the interviews, I first transcribed each audio tape word for word. As with the field notes, I read through the interviews and made notes about the impressions I was getting from them. I again isolated the instances of intertextual linking and coded them as well. After isolating the intertextual links, I generated a label for each link the students made and continued until the categories were clearly defined and the data was saturated (Strauss, 1987). I then generated a list of sub categories, if any, within a general category, and examples of instances that fit within each category. The data contained co-occurring codes because of the factors that could be construed as a kind or a type of link. The codes for the kinds of links were: Links by literary elements; links by genre; links by source texts; prompted and spontaneous links.

After the intertextual links were identified and coded, I went back to determine whether intertextual links were acknowledged by others or not, and labeled and categorized those as well. The instances of acknowledging links or not were labeled “Acknowledgement”. Acknowledgment occurred when a student would answer Mrs. Ryan’s questions or shared a personal experience connected to what they were reading, and was confirmed to me during interviews with focal children. Links were also directly acknowledged when a student verbally agreed or disagreed with an intertextual link made by Mrs. Ryan or a peer. “Acknowledging” includes agreeing or disagreeing with the views of others, and both contribute to making meaning during classroom discussions. “Disregard” occurred when the focal child either ignored what someone said, or, for whatever reason, forgot or was not aware of what someone

said. Instances of disregarding what someone said occurred during interviews since I was able to directly question the focal children about the links made in class. Table 2 outlines the intertextual links made by the students.

Table 2: Intertextual Links

Category	Subcategory	Definition
Literary Elements		Connections made between literary elements from one text to another
	Character	Connections between one character found in different texts; connections between different characters, connections between characters and real people.
	Plot	Connections between events in texts or to real life events.
	Setting	Connections between settings of texts or to real places.
	Illustration	Connections between illustrations from one text to another.
	Point of View	Connections between the point of view from one text to another.

Table 2: Continued

Category	Subcategory	Definition
Genre		Comparing and/or contrasting elements and characteristics of particular genre.
Source Texts		The kinds of texts used when making connections
	Media	Connections between media including books, movies, video games, and cultural print (restaurant logos, etc).
	Personal	Connections between texts to one's background knowledge and personal experiences.
Manifestation		How and when links were made
	Prompted	Connections made after direct questioning by teacher or by me.
	Spontaneous	Connections made by student during reading experiences or discussions without direct prompting from others.

Table 2: Continued

Category	Subcategory	Definition
Acknowledgment of links		Instances when students acknowledged connections made by others or not.

After coding and categorizing the intertextual links and the acknowledged links, I continued analysis by isolating the data for each category and then comparing the categories. I looked for patterns in the data to determine when the different kinds of links occurred, during what kinds of reading experiences, who made the links, who disregarded the links, and when links were made spontaneously or through prompting. Finally, I examined how all these data fit together to address what kinds of intertextual links students made during classroom reading experiences, what links were acknowledged by others and contributed to the meaning making process, which links were disregarded and why.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of the study was to identify the kinds of intertextual links children made during classroom reading experiences, which links were acknowledged, which links were disregarded and why. I looked to the construct of intertextuality as a way in which learners make connections among, develop schema about, and comprehend texts. The role of sociocultural learning within a discourse community was the underlying theory as I looked at how meaning was socially constructed in a classroom environment. While the bulk of the reading material presented to the children were connected in some way, there were other picture books read during the same weeks as the units, but were not related to them. These were the guided reading booklets, a Native American folktale about a rattlesnake, and a fantasy book about a scarecrow family. The majority of the reading experiences observed were teacher readalouds, partner reading, and independent reading of picture books and series chapter books. The children read or were read fewer informational books (during the Thanksgiving unit), one informational storybook (*Arthur Meets the President* presented the day before Election Day), and no poetry. The children made some intertextual links during class discussions and activities, and these were mostly during and after teacher readalouds, popcorn reading, and whole class discussions after independent reading. These connections were facilitated through Mrs. Ryan's questioning. There was little to virtually no discussion between students during or after partner reading experiences, literature circles, and guided reading, and

therefore, very few instances of observable intertextual links for these kinds of reading experiences were documented. It was during individual interviews that the vast majority of intertextual links were revealed. The kinds of links the children made were links by literary elements, links by genre, and links by source texts. The children made intertextual links with prompting from Mrs. Ryan during class discussions and with me during interviews, and other times they made them spontaneously while discussing what they read in class. Links that were acknowledged were done so either tacitly during class discussions or were acknowledged directly by someone. Links that were disregarded were done so when students were unfamiliar with the text source used to make the connection, or when students were not attending to, or ignoring what someone had said. What the children saw as purposeful or useful to them in their role as a student in the classroom seemed to be a factor as to why an intertextual connection made by someone else would be acknowledged or disregarded.

Intertextual Links by Literary Elements

Intertextual links by literary elements were the connections the students made between literary elements from one text to another. These kinds of links included links by character, plot, setting, illustration, and point of view. Links by character were the primary type of links the children made, and most often were the emphasis of discussions both in class and during individual interviews. Linking by plot was the second most predominant kind of link as the students often had to identify the “problem” and “solution” in class assignments related to books read; in particular during the five week mystery unit using Nate the

Great and Cam Jansen series books. The connections made between illustrations were made mostly during a three week unit on Arthur. Part of the unit included children learning about the illustration style of Marc Brown and how he had changed the physical features of the characters over time. Links by setting occurred rarely, and were made when the children compared the traditional version of *The Three Little Pigs* to *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, and when discussing the year that *Sarah Morton's Day* and *Samuel Eaton's Day* took place. Point of view links were made less often as well, and were usually prompted by the teacher during class discussions or by me during individual interviews.

Links by Character

Links by character were the connections the students made between characters in texts. These links included connections made between the same characters from different texts of a series, connections between different characters in texts, and connections between characters and real people, including them. Links made by character were the most frequent kind of link made by literary elements.

Same Character. Same character connections included relationships and connections the students made between the same character in another text, including books or television shows. For example, the students made connections between same characters after they had read the variant of *The Three Little Pigs*. After reading aloud the variant version, Mrs. Ryan had the students complete a Venn Diagramming activity comparing and contrasting the

two books. The focal children noted the same characters found in each book as well as the different intentions of the characters from the original version to the variant.

As the children spent from two to three weeks at a time focusing on a series book, they were engaged in stories revolving around familiar characters. The main characters in the series books were depicted as middle-class children. All but Cam Jansen were male, and all but Arthur was white. Arthur, being an aardvark, had no apparent ethnicity. All the main characters had mothers; Arthur books included a father; and all have either siblings or friends present in every book. The responses related to same character connections from the focal children during interviews ranged from naming the characters, to describing the characters' personalities, to making generalizations about what actions they might expect the character to take if they read another book in the series. At times, the names of the characters facilitated generalizations made about particular characters.

For many of the series books read, the main character had an adjective attached to his/her name which seemed to help children make connections and generalizations about the character. The adjective "great" was attached to the character Nate the Great, the nickname "Cam" (short for "camera") was attached to Cam Jansen (she had a photographic mind), and the adjective "horrible" was attached to Horrible Harry. While Arthur was an ordinary name for the aardvark main character, some secondary characters in this series had adjectives to connect with that the children used when describing them as well. For example,

the teacher “Ratburn” was literally a tall rat and his name helped focal child Roger figure out what kind of animal he was. “The Brain” was the name of a character who was a rabbit and a stereotypically smart student. Focal child Oscar noted that “The Brain” was one of his favorite Arthur characters because he was a “nerd” and Oscar wanted to dress up like a nerd for Halloween.

All the focal children told me they expected Harry to be “horrible” in every Horrible Harry book they read. I asked what they meant by “horrible” and some used euphemisms when describing their thoughts. Beth, for example, explained that Harry was not bad, just someone who “did not make wise decisions.” Beth continued on that Harry would seek revenge if someone called him a bad name, or did something to him first as had happened in a couple of books she read. Ned characterized him as someone who was “a good guy who just liked horrible stuff.” He explained that Harry just liked things that were “gross” and he was just playing tricks on other people. Ellen thought Harry was “sometimes good, sometimes bad,” but would not go into any detail about why. Oscar told me emphatically that Harry was “no good; he *is* bad.” Oscar then cited several examples from books to support his opinion. Roger also described Harry as “evil, bad, and rude,” and cited what Mrs. Ryan had read to them in class. Conversely, Nate the Great was described as a “good guy,” and/or a “hero” by the focal children. All the focal children expected him to solve a case, eat pancakes, and leave a note for his mom. While other focal children thought of Cam Jansen as a detective, she was described as an “ordinary girl with a photographic mind” by Ned. Beth told me in detail how she got her

nickname and the color of her hair when she was born and how she could take pictures with her mind. All the focal children expected her to use her gift to solve a mystery or some kind of crime in every Cam Jansen book.

All of the focal students named the repeat characters when discussing two or more series books. The focal students also noted some character traits about repeat characters. For example, Oscar noted that Annie was sad in a couple of Nate the Great books he had read. Beth also noted that Annie needed help in a couple of Nate the Great books. Ned and Roger noted that Nate loved to eat pancakes and they helped him think better. The focal students also made generalizations about the characters from one book to the next when prompted about what they could expect in another book of that series. For example, Ned noted that Annie would always lose something, and Nate would always solve the case in every Nate the Great book. Some students also noted any inconsistencies about a character from book to book, and offered their opinions about characters' attitudes and behaviors. Beth in particular noted that the D.W. was being helpful to Arthur "for once" in *Arthur Meets the President*, in contrast to her bothering him in previous books she had read.

Different Characters. Different character connections included the relationships and connections made between different characters from one text to another. The children's responses when connecting different characters included basic comparisons of age or gender and making connections based on characters' personalities. These kinds of connections were, for the most part, made during interviews after asking students if particular characters reminded

them of other characters they read, or directly asking them to compare particular characters. However, there were instances of the children making different character connections during classroom reading experiences. After partner reading *The Three Little Pigs*, Roger made a connection between the wolf in *The Three Little Pigs* to the wolf character in the story of *The boy who cried wolf*. This was a spontaneous link he made when coloring his booklet one day and was conversing with a child next to him. Later in our interview, he revealed to me that the wolf in *The Three Little Pigs* reminded him of the wolf from *The Boy who Cried Wolf*. He had watched a television show called “Jimmy Neutron” where the character on the television show made a reference to the boy who cried wolf.

Other different character connections in the context of classroom reading experiences occurred after Mrs. Ryan read aloud two similar books about life for pilgrim children in the 1600’s, entitled *Sarah Morton’s Day* and *Samuel Eaton’s Day*. After reading about Sarah, Mrs. Ryan asked the children questions about life for the little girl. Beth noted that Sarah reminded her of Laura Ingalls Wilder from the *Little House on the Prairie* television show. During our interviews, the children compared the characters Sarah and Samuel as well and how they both had to do a lot of work. Ned noted in particular that he thought Sarah’s work might have been a little harder than Samuel’s.

During our interviews when asked to compare Nate and Cam, Oscar, Ellen, and Beth noted that Cam and Nate were both detectives. Ned focused on

basic features of the characters and noted that they were not alike because Nate was a boy and Cam was a girl.

When discussing Horrible Harry with Roger, he made a spontaneous link to Nate the Great. He read me his assignment that listed the horrible things Harry did in the first chapter of the book. When he finished reading he reflected (in a surprised tone), “All those things! He’s evil!” Then he stated in a low voice, “What happened to Nate the Great? I like Nate the Great more!” I asked what made him think of Nate, and he said he didn’t know. We talked about how these characters were opposites and their names were even opposites. I also directly asked the children to compare Nate the Great and Horrible Harry. They all noted that Nate was a good guy and Harry did “horrible” things. Oscar stated that Harry was horrible “but a lot of characters in books are nice.” He then mentioned Cam, Arthur, and Nate as examples of nice characters. Similarly, when asked to compare Nate and Harry, Ellen responded that she liked Nate better than Harry because, “he is a good person. He’s not horrible; he’s great.”

Character to people. Character to people links occurred when the students made connections between characters and people, including them, or to someone they knew personally or knew about. These connections occurred during readalouds as well as during individual interviews. The connections made during a classroom readaloud of *How the Rattlesnake Got its Rattle*, were manifested through Mrs. Ryan’s direct questioning when asking children, “Do you ever want to do what your older brother or sister wants to do?” This sparked a discussion of personal experiences that the children had. Mrs. Ryan

helped students relate their experiences to the little snake in the book who wanted to be like his parents and older siblings. After reading aloud the stories about Sarah Morton and Samuel Eaton, Mrs. Ryan led a discussion comparing the characters to them. The children noted the different chores they had to do, how they had to catch rabbits for dinner, and how the boys wore “nightclothes” instead of “pajamas.”

During interviews, the children compared the characters they read about to people they knew at times without prompting from me. Beth often connected the characters she read about to real people. She was very thoughtful as she discussed the books and she seemed to naturally relate the characters to real life people. For example, she noted how Nate was probably in second grade “like we are”, and how it is possible for someone to have a memory like Cam Jansen because her little sister remembered something that she did not remember. I prompted the children at times, too, asking if the characters reminded them of anyone they knew. Oscar noted that Horrible Harry acted like his little brother and his classmate, Ross. Oscar also made a spontaneous connection with the character Samuel Eaton:

Oscar: He’s seven years old! I’m one year older than him. I think it was hard work. Trying to act like a man when you’re actually a boy. Hard! And I can’t believe he has to stand up and eat, and he can only talk to someone when asked!

Me: Was that from *Samuel Eaton’s Day*?

Oscar: It was from...*Sarah Morton's Day*. She had to chase the chickens.

(slowly) She only took one bath a month! (Interview, November 22, 2004)

Ned and Ellen made connections between characters and people only after direct prompting, and these were basic connections. For example, Ned noted the people in his class who he thought were smart like Nate the Great. Ellen noted that she did not have to chase chickens like Sarah Morton. Alan discussed during interviews how he had the same glasses as Arthur. Roger noted that he had an aunt named Annie, a character from Nate the Great.

Links by Plot

Intertextual links by plot included connections made between the events from one text to another, or to real life events or possibilities. Links by plot were the second most frequent kind of link made the children during the study. The connections made during classroom experiences occurred after partner-reading *The Three Little Pigs*, and then a read aloud of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Again, during the Venn diagramming activity the focal children compared the books and noted the differences in plot. During our interview, Beth discussed both books and observed that “the main stories are not the same” and continued:

Beth: In this one (traditional) the wolf didn't come in very much. You know, because the three little pigs were like the stars of the book and the show. And the big bad wolf, he kind of just came along and in this one

(variant) he was here almost all of the time in the story. And in the other one (traditional), it's like the pigs knew what the wolf did. (Interview, September 22, 2004)

The focal children all noted during interviews that the plot was going to be similar in all the Nate the Great books they read. In particular, they noted that there would be some kind of case to solve, and Nate would be the one to figure out the clues. They all understood that there would be some kind of problem or mystery in Cam Jansen as well and that she would take pictures in her mind to use for clues.

The students also made connections between the plot in the books they read to real life experiences or possibilities. Beth often went into detail when discussing books and related the events to her own experiences or to real life possibilities. After an independent reading episode of *Nate the Great and the Missing Key*, I interviewed Beth and asked her to make a prediction about what was going to happen. Beth related her real life experience to predict about the events in the story as such:

Beth: I think it (the key) would probably be still on the table or it would be right in front of their eyes. That happens at our house.

Me: It does?

Beth: It happened to my mom and me before. I'm just looking for something and it's right in front of my eyes. And my mom does it sometimes on mistake, and, kind of funny when you find out it's right in front of your eyes. You're like, 'it's right in front of my eyes!'

And, sometimes people leave the key under the doormat, so maybe they'll find it there. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Beth also imagined what it would be like for her own class to go to Washington, D.C. like the characters did in *Arthur Meets the President*, and discussed how hard it would be for Mrs. Ryan to take 21 kids on an airplane to Washington, D.C. When discussing *Arthur Meets the President* with Oscar, he told me how George Washington was not the first president to live in the White House because it was not built yet. He also related the book to President's Day when Bush and Kerry were running for president, and he diverged to a discussion about that and wanted to know for whom I was voting. Roger stated that "George Bush must like living there!" (Interview, November 4, 2004) when looking at the features of the White House from that book. Ellen stated that in real life children can write a note to the president. Oscar also noted that Nate could be a real detective, but if it were him, he would "want to earn some dough for it." (Interview, October 5, 2004). Oscar continued talking about how Nate solves mysteries, but does not ever get paid for any of it.

Links by Setting

Links by setting included the connections and relationships made between the setting of stories to other texts or to real life. These connections were not made often and were done so during class discussions before and after partner reading or readalouds, and during interviews. In classroom experiences, these occurred when discussing elements of fairy tales such as a pre-reading discussion of *The Three Little Pigs*. Ned noted the setting of fairy tales

“happened long ago.” (Field notes, September 21, 2004) During another class discussion during a read aloud, Ned noted that the setting in *Samuel Eaton* was “like when they used to have stores with wood that says the store’s name” (Field notes, November 22, 2004). Mrs. Ryan added that he was thinking of “general stores” and those came later, as the pilgrims grew their own food. After reading aloud *Arthur Meets the President*, Mrs. Ryan had the children compare the White House to their own house. Washington, D.C. was the setting of the story and the book provides detailed information about The White House as the fictional characters in Arthur visit there. The students named elements of the White House that were different from their own homes.

The focal children made few connections by setting during interviews as well. After reading the Three Little Pigs variants, Beth and Oscar both noted that the settings were the same, with the same kind of houses in the same town. Oscar also noted that the setting for *Arthur Meets the President* is a real place, and that Sarah Morton and Samuel Eaton’s books both took place about the same time in history. Andrew noted that two Horrible Harry books had different settings, in that one takes place in a school and the other in an amusement park. Ellen noted that the Thanksgiving books she read all took place a long time ago. The settings of the series books presented to the children were all predominantly suburban areas, and relatively contemporary tales.

Links by illustrations

Links by illustrations occurred when the students compared and contrasted the illustrations in the books they read as well as connecting

illustrations in the classroom to what they were reading. In particular, the students read early Arthur books and learned about why Marc Brown changed his illustration style with the characters in Arthur in subsequent years. In fact, all of the focal children made it a point during interviews to tell me about Marc Brown and how he changed the physical features of his characters. In particular, the characters used to look like animals, and Marc Brown changed them to look more human-like or cartoon-like. The children mentioned that Arthur's fur was lighter and his nose virtually disappeared through time; and he now sports glasses. Francine looks less like a monkey and no longer has a tail. The children chose books from the Arthur collection to point out and discuss the differences in the illustrations of various books. The children were also familiar with Arthur videos and noted that the Arthur on the videos looks just like the Arthur from the newer versions in Marc Brown's picture books.

Other links by illustrations were made when Beth was comparing the Little Pigs variants. She especially liked the illustrations in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* and noted how that book was filled with more pictures, which were bigger and funnier than the original. Oscar pointed out the illustrations as well when comparing the two stories. While the chapter books did not have a lot of illustrations, the children sometimes looked to the illustrations for comparisons. Ned noticed that Cam Jansen books had pictures of her mother in the book, but you never saw a picture of the mother in Nate the Great. Based on the illustrations, Ned felt that Cam was older than Nate. Beth said that Nate was in second grade "like we are", because he looked like it from

his cover illustration. Beth pointed out to me in an interview that a poster in the classroom was an exact replica of the cover of *Arthur Meets the President*, something she remembered that classmate Ross had pointed out originally.

Links by Point of View

Links by point of view were instances when the students related or made connections between the story-teller from one text to another. There were few of these kinds of links made. During classroom reading experiences, Mrs. Ryan explicitly pointed these out when reading *The Three Little Pigs* variants, *Nate the Great*, and *Horrible Harry*. Mrs. Ryan told the children that *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* was told by the Wolf. She also told the children that *Nate the Great* told the stories in his books because of the use of the word “I”. When discussing *Horrible Harry*, Mrs. Ryan noted that Doug was the one telling the story about Harry.

During my interviews with Beth, she noted that she preferred the point of view from *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* to the original:

Beth: I kind of like it when I heard the true story of the three little pigs because it’s different, and I kind of liked that someone’s, one of the characters were telling the story. That was kind of neat.

Me: That’s a good point.

Beth: Yeah, instead of just someone telling it. And in this one (variant) you can make the voices a little better. (Interview, September 22, 2004)

Beth mentioned the notion of “voice” several times during my interviews with her. She noticed that when there is dialogue in a book, the reader can

change their voice to try to sound like the character. She told me her dad did that when reading *Hank the Cowdog* books to her at home. Two weeks or so after the interview about the little pigs, she mentioned in another interview that Nate the Great was telling the story, because he was always saying “I”, just like the wolf was telling his side of the story in the Little Pigs variant. Beth and Oscar also told me that the point of view from Horrible Harry stories is from Doug. Roger also noted that all Nate the Great books were told from Nate’s point of view because of the word “I”.

Links by Genre

Links by genre were made when children made connections between the features of a particular text. Discussing genre is a naturally intertextual exercise as one is synthesizing and making connections between similar characteristics of many works of literature. Many of the previous descriptions of students noting similar plot lines between books are tied to their understanding of genre, which were the common elements of several texts. During classroom discussions, connections related to genre occurred when Mrs. Ryan asked the children, “What kinds of literature are there when you go into the library?” Oscar noted there were “fiction, non-fiction, and professional.” Some other examples were Goosebumps books, Captain Underpants books, and Dav Pilkey books. Mrs. Ryan asked where they would find *The Three Little Pigs*, and what kind of story it was. Then, a discussion about folktale and fairy tales began. Other links by genre were directly stated when Mrs. Ryan noted that Nate the Great and Cam Jansen were part of a unit on mystery.

During interviews with the focal children, Oscar and Beth noted that *Nate the Great* and *Cam Jansen* were mystery books. When asked about how well they liked the books they read in class, Oscar and Ned mentioned to me they preferred to read scary books, and both mentioned *Goosebumps*, in particular, and said these were the books they read at home. Oscar stated he liked exciting books, and *Goosebumps* books were more exciting than the books he read in class. Abigail told me she did not like books “pretty much” but she thought Arthur books were “cool.” As the children read both Arthur picture books and chapter books during my observations, I asked them to compare these kinds of books. All of the focal children, except Ellen, preferred picture books to chapter books. Their reasoning in general was that they enjoyed looking at pictures and there were less words to read. Beth explained that some of the words were hard, and there were no pictures to help figure out a word. Oscar said picture books were more fun, and told me about a particular illustration of D.W. in an Arthur book that he liked. Ellen stated that she preferred chapter books because they were “harder” to read.

Source Texts

The source texts were the kinds of texts used to make intertextual connections. These kinds of links included making intertextual connections between books and other media, and intertextual connections between books and personal background knowledge or experiences.

Media

These were source texts that included connecting the books read during classroom experiences to other books, or to television shows and videos, video games, computer games and programs, and songs.

The children made book-to-book connections when making intertextual links between repeat characters in series books and making intertextual links between different characters, and when making connections between plot, setting, and genre. The source texts for these connections were the elements found in the books and those were used as the sources for comparisons. Book to television or video connections were made when the children compared the book to a television show. Roger, for example, after reading *The Three Little Pigs* and asking about *the boy who cried wolf*, told me in an interview that on an episode of Jimmy Neutron, Jimmy's friend was telling the story of the little boy who cried wolf. The children noted that Arthur was a television show on PBS, and Beth told me about Buster, an Arthur character who now has his own show. The children watched Arthur videos in class in addition to reading Arthur books during the unit. Beth told me that in videos you can hear what the character sounds like, rather than having someone read it. Beth and Oscar talked about books that were also videos, including: Clifford, Barbie Swan Lake, Berenstain Bears, and Spongebob. During our discussion about Goosebumps, Oscar told me there were Goosebumps videos that make the characters look like real mummies, and he enjoyed watching them. All the focal children in the study told me they preferred to watch videos to reading books. In general, they stated

it was more “relaxing” to watch videos and you did not have to read or “do” anything. Ellen stated that with videos you do not have to figure out what the “problem” is, something they were asked to do when completing their assignment sheets. Other media connections included connecting the book to a song they knew. Oscar did this when discussing *Horrible Harry and the Purple People*:

Me: Tell me what the purple people are, what are they, anyway?

Oscar: Well, see, I bet Harry got the whole crazy idea from that song.

Me: What idea? What crazy idea?

Oscar: The, the song...(singing) I’m a one-eyed, one-horned, flying purple people eater.

Me: Oh, did he make up the people?

Oscar: I haven’t read the whole thing yet. I think he just imagined them because of his ruler. His ruler, it has, like these...purple people painted on top.

Me: Did he think they were real?

Oscar: Yes. He does think they’re real. (Interview, December 2, 2004)

Roger also sang a little song during an interview when we were discussing *Arthur Meets the President*. We were discussing the real places found in the book, including the Rose Garden at the White House where the real President makes speeches from at times. As Roger was pointing out some features of the book, he began singing America the Beautiful, in a mock-serious

way, “Oh beautiful for spacious skies...” (Interview, November 4, 2004), and laughed.

Personal text sources

These links were the connections the children made between the book under discussion and their own background knowledge or personal experiences. These connections included the intertextual links made between characters and real people, the intertextual links made between plot and real life events, and the intertextual links made between setting and real life places. Some children drew on personal text sources when making meaning from books they read. Beth and Oscar used these kinds of connections more than any other of the focal children. Ellen used personal text sources rarely, and did so after some prompting about the name of “Farmer MacNugget” in *’Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving*. She said it reminded her of McDonald’s. She also connected the word “Frontier” in one book read to “Frontier City”, an amusement park. The parent helper was going over vocabulary words for the chapter and wrote down “Frontier” on a dry-erase board. Ellen announced, “Frontier City”, which led her and another member of her literature circle into a discussion about Frontier City. Ned made a real-life connection during a class discussion, and that was when discussing Samuel Eaton’s Day (the general store comparison) and one personal connection to a book he read during an interview, and that was the fact that he liked to build forts with boxes like the ones found in *Nate the Great Goes Down in the Dumps*. Alan referred to himself or his family often during interviews, and sometimes this took us off the topic at hand. I only interviewed

Alan five times during the study, because he was often with the reading specialist when I was there, and he did not read the same books as the other children.

Manifestation

I use the term “manifestation” to describe how and when the documented links were made. Prompted links describe the links that the children made after direct instruction or questioning by Mrs. Ryan or me to do so. Some examples of prompted links during classroom experiences were when Mrs. Ryan had the children engage in the Venn Diagramming activity after reading the Little Pigs variants, and when she asked the children to directly compare the White House to their own houses during the read aloud of *Arthur Meets the President*.

Examples of prompted links during interviews were when I asked direct questions to the focal children, such as “how are these books alike?” Or, when I asked more specific questions such as, “how are these characters alike?” I asked these kinds of questions when it was necessary to prompt the focal child into talking about the books. Spontaneous links describe the connections that the children verbalized without being directly asked to make connections. An example of a spontaneous link made during classroom experiences was when Ross announced that Samuel looked like the “grim reaper” (Field notes, November 22, 2004) during a read aloud of *Samuel Eaton’s Day*, in response to a photographic scene depicting Samuel chopping down crops using a sickle. Another example of a spontaneous link during classroom experiences was when Roger made the connection between *The Boy who Cried Wolf* and *the Three*

Little Pigs while coloring his booklet. Examples of spontaneous links during interviews were when the children made intertextual connections while talking about the classroom reading experience, my only prompt being, “Tell me about what you read today,” or when Roger began singing *America the Beautiful* while discussing the White House and Washington, D.C.

Prompted Links

Prompted links were made both during classroom experiences and interviews. Prompted links made during classroom experiences were made during whole class discussions following read alouds, independent reading, and popcorn reading. While these classroom discussions were often centered on basic comprehension questions focusing on factual recall, and making inferences, there were times when Mrs. Ryan facilitated intertextual connections through her direct questioning. These kinds of links prompted mostly character to people or real life connections (using personal text sources) as the students were asked to relate to the characters in some way. For example, during a read aloud of *How the Rattlesnake Got its Rattle*, Mrs. Ryan asked the children if they ever wanted to do something their older brother or sister did, similar to the little snake in the book. A child responded, “Drive a car!” (Field notes, November 5, 2004). Mrs. Ryan then continued her discussion of why we can not do some things until a certain age. There were a couple of times when Mrs. Ryan prompted links between books read in class. An example of this was when the class discussed and completed the Venn diagram over the *Little Pigs* variants. Five weeks were spent on the theme of “mystery”, but a direct

comparison or discussion about the different mystery books (several Nate the Great and Cam Jansen books) was not documented.

During interviews, I prompted intertextual links as well through my questioning. I focused on personal text sources as well to generate connections when the children read a new book in class. After they began reading the series books, I could naturally ask them to compare books. This prompted the majority of the connections made by literary elements, with a discussion about the characters as the primary focus. Secondly, they noted similar plot lines, as Ellen stated when talking about the Nate the Great books she had read, “It’s like, kind of like, everything’s always missing in those books” (Interview, October 5, 2004). When I asked the children to directly compare Nate and Cam books, books from two different series, yet related by theme (mystery), the primary type of link was by plot in that they were mystery books, or there was some kind of problem to be solved. Beth, Oscar, Roger and Ellen noted that they were both “detectives”, but Ned thought of Nate as a detective and Cam as a regular girl, with a photographic memory.

Spontaneous links

It was not always necessary to prompt the children directly into making connections. These links were made during classroom experiences as well as during interviews as well. These kinds of links during classroom experiences were the result of something that reminded the children about something else. For example, when making rattlesnakes from neckties to use as a prop in retelling *How the Rattlesnake Got its Rattle*, a child noted the glue name

“Tacky” and began talking to another child about the Tacky the Penguin books they read in first grade. Spontaneous links at times led the children into a discussion about something other than the book they were working on. Spontaneous links made during interviews were made mostly by Beth and Oscar. During interviews, Beth would often sit down and just begin talking about the book they read in class. She often had opinions about the characters and their actions and related it to her own experiences. Beth’s spontaneous connections often remained focused on the book under discussion. Oscar, too, made spontaneous connections often, but he would start talking about his brothers or his dog and trail off the book. For example, in *Arthur’s Christmas*, the dog gets very fat and this led Oscar into a story about his own dog and how his uncle referred to him as Garfield. After reading *Nate the Great*, and noting how Nate was afraid of Fang, Oscar told me how he was afraid of his own dog and went into stories about how the dog jumps on him all the time. I learned a lot about his dog Sophie from our interviews. Ned and Ellen were not as talkative as the other focal children, and they always had to be directly prompted during interviews. Their responses and connections were very literal, but they were able to recall events in the stories they read.

Acknowledgment of Links

The intertextual links made during classroom experiences and interviews were either acknowledged or disregarded. Links were elicited at times when Mrs. Ryan asked the students direct questions during class discussions. Then, the students would share an experience, or answer a question. For example,

during a discussion about literature found in the library, some students volunteered the kinds of books they were familiar with, such as fairy tales and non-fiction. Another example was when Mrs. Ryan asked specifically what they could not do until they were older and related it to the rattlesnake character in the book they read. I documented these kinds of exchanges and asked the focal children about them during interviews to find out if they were acknowledged or not.

There were times when intertextual links were acknowledged directly by someone in the class through verbal feedback. For example, during read aloud discussions, Mrs. Ryan would say, “good”, or “thank you”, or “OK” in response to the students. For example, she directly acknowledged Dawn’s connection of driving a car to the rattlesnake character wanting to grow up too soon. She stated that there are certain things that we need to wait to do, such as learning to drive. Another example was during a discussion about Hanukah, when she thanked Jim for sharing information about how the holiday is celebrated. The students also directly acknowledged links during our interviews. Jim directly acknowledged Tom’s connection between a glue brand (Tacky) to Tacky the Penguin, and they began to discuss the books. In our interviews, Oscar and Beth both noted that they remembered *Tacky the Penguin* as did Tom when he was using the glue. In an interview with Oscar, I asked him about the comment Ross made when he said Samuel looked like the grim reaper. Oscar acknowledged Ross’ link and told me that the Grim Reaper was a character from the movie *Scream* who carried around a sickle with him. Beth and Pete were

acknowledging each other's intertextual connections during their conversation about the covers of the *Nate the Great* books. They were identifying the similarities and differences they found with the two books they had read. Josh directly acknowledged Ellen's connection between the book they were reading and Frontier City, as this prompted a discussion about the park.

There were times when a link was acknowledged, but was corrected by Mrs. Ryan. For example, Beth made an intertextual connection between *Sarah Morton's Day* and Laura Ingalls Wilder. Mrs. Ryan acknowledged her, and added that Laura Ingalls Wilder came about 100 years later. Mrs. Ryan also corrected Ned's connection to the General Store Signs and *Samuel Eaton's Day*. She said, "No, they grew their own food. General Stores came later." Oscar made an intertextual connection during a read aloud of *Samuel Eaton's Day*, after they had read *Sarah Morton's Day*. Mrs. Ryan asked for one fact about life in the 1600's, and Oscar replied, "The children had to stand up when they ate." Mrs. Ryan said, "That's not from this book" (Field notes, November 22, 2004). He was referring to something he read about in *Sarah Morton's Day*, and made the connection to *Samuel Eaton's Day*. Oscar also made a connection between genres when asked what kinds of literature there was, and noted there were fiction, non-fiction and professional books. Mrs. Ryan stated that professional was non-fiction. She tacitly acknowledged his responses of Fiction and Non-Fiction, and corrected him on Professional. He also stated that you learn "a fact" from fairytales, and Mrs. Ryan noted, "You learn a moral" (Field notes, September 21, 2004). When looking at the times that Mrs. Ryan disagreed

with links the children made, it appeared to be to correct misinformation or clarify information.

In my interviews, I identified a link as being disregarded when the focal student did not remember, or ignored the student, or was unfamiliar with the source text. For example, Ed was continually making comments during a read aloud of *Arthur's Christmas*. He made five comments that no one acknowledged during the read aloud, and the focal children I interviewed did not acknowledge either. The same happened when *The Little Scarecrow Boy* was read to the children. Ed was asking questions to his peers, and making comments, and seemingly enjoying the book, but was not acknowledged in class or during interviews. Another example of disregarding links was during my interview with Roger after Mrs. Ryan made a connection between *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *Cam Jansen*. I asked him about this, and he said he did not know what she was talking about because he had never seen the show.

Why links were disregarded. It was difficult to determine why intertextual links were disregarded by others. When interviewing the focal children, it appeared that they were not even aware of some of the connections that were made. Again, there were very few instances of intertextual links during classroom experiences that were documented that I could even ask about in the first place. Ed's links were disregarded by the focal children, and he had an average status in the class according to the focal children. I suspect that the children were attending to what their teacher was reading instead of listening to the comments he was making, as Mrs. Ryan did not acknowledge his comments,

either. Acknowledging links includes agreeing or disagreeing with links as differences of opinion contributes to the learning process. There was not a lot of discussion about the books between the students during partner reading or literature circles, other than completing assignments directly from a prepared packet of questions. The discussions about the books, again, were facilitated by Mrs. Ryan in whole group situations.

Links by Reading Ability

The below-level readers in this study, Alan and Roger were able to verbalize intertextual links when prompted, and these were related to repeat characters in books or to relate to some personal experience. While Alan was identified for a reading specialist, Roger stayed in the classroom and was given chapter books to read along with the other children. During partner reading experiences, Roger and his partner would be the last pair to finish reading. He was a slow, word-by-word reader. He also seemed to have difficulty decoding chapter books on his own, and I observed him closely during independent reading experiences and noted that he rarely actually looked at the pages of the books he read. Some behaviors he exhibited would be to clean out his desk, get the pass to go to the bathroom, lay his head down on his desk, and look over at the person next to him. Roger worked actively to listen to the teacher, classmates and used his own logic and personal experiences when completing assignments related to classroom reading experiences. Roger made intertextual connections during interviews based on what he thought the book was about and often said something to the effect, “That’s what Mrs. Ryan told us,” or “That’s

what someone said happened.” Classroom discussions and group partners were an important source for these children to “read” their environment and to complete their assignments. Roger told me near the end of the study that he absolutely hated reading, did not see the point of it, and felt it was a complete waste of time.

The on-level readers, Beth and Oscar sometimes needed help with decoding text from the chapter books read, but were creating intertextual links based on character, plot, and literary elements such as point of view and author’s writing style. These students were sophisticated at times when considering character’s thoughts and motives. I would describe Beth’s responses as experiential and aesthetic. She seemed to buy into the text world and spoke of the characters and situations as if they could really happen. When discussing books with me, she would often interject with her own opinions, for example she said, “I don’t blame her for giving him money to buy something. It was pretty nice of her to do that, but I would think the man could have handled it a little better” (Interview, October 19) when discussing *Cam Jansen and the Scary Snake Mystery*. Beth would often tell me what the characters said and get into different voices when discussing the books. In class, Beth was a serious student and put a lot of detail into completing assignments. However, Beth did not always have time to finish reading the chapter books assigned. She would finish assignments with someone’s help if she did not get to the end of the book. I asked if she would finish the book some time, and she stated, “Probably not, but

that's OK with me." In class, she was quiet and stayed focused on doing what she needed to do.

Oscar, too, connected aesthetically and the texts evoked emotions in him. For example, he seemed horrified that the children in the 1600's had to do the work they did, and he mentioned on several different occasions, both in class and in interviews, that he could not believe children had to stand up when they ate, and could only speak when spoken to. He also spoke about the character Rosamond in *Nate the Great*, and how she was not being a good friend to the others, and stated, "You don't often see people not being nice to their friends!" (Interview, September 30, 2004). Oscar's favorite books were *Goosebumps*, but during an interview about *'Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving*, he began a discussion about the author, Dav Pilkey, and how he really liked his Captain Underpants books. As we usually interviewed in the library, Oscar often looked around on the bookshelves and told about some of the books that he saw. He did the same in class at times, looking at books on the shelf and talking to classmates about them, getting himself and others "off task" during literature circles.

The above level readers in the study, Ned and Ellen, were proficient in reading classroom books and completing their assignments. During interviews, these children did not want to go beyond a literal, factual interpretation of the text. After a few interviews, Ellen was probably anticipating that I was going to ask her to make some connections and inferences. She would usually recall what was going on in the story and say, "and that's all I know" as a signal to me

that she did not want to elaborate. Ned, too, would stick to the text and say something like, “it didn’t say” or “I don’t know yet” when asked to make connections. These two readers did not seem to have any reaction to the stories, whether they found them funny or whatever. When I prompted Ned by asking if he enjoyed the various stories or not, he told me he did not like the books he read in class. He, like Oscar, enjoyed Goosebumps books. In fact, Oscar is the one who introduced these books to Ned, a fact I found out during an interview with Ned.

There were four boys and two girls who were focal children in the study. Gender did not seem to be a factor in the kinds of links they made. Social status did not appear to influence if children acknowledged links or not. There was one child who did have a high status with all of the focal children, but children with lower status were acknowledged at times as well. While all of the focal students were able to make intertextual connections, either through their own natural responses to what they read or through my direct questioning, they had different ways of reacting and responding to the books. The kinds of intertextual connections they made leads to a discussion and consideration of how these findings can inform teaching practices, as well as a consideration of the kinds of texts used in classroom learning experiences, and how children learn from each other most effectively.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study revealed the kinds of intertextual links the children made during classroom reading experiences, the links that were acknowledged by others and the links that were disregarded. The kinds of intertextual links made were connections to the literary elements between texts; connections about genre; connections between media and personal texts; and connections manifested spontaneously or through direct prompting. The links that were acknowledged by others were done so either directly through verbal feedback or were acknowledged tacitly during classroom discussions. The links that were disregarded were related to unfamiliarity with a source text used in making connections or were connections that were ignored or not attended to by the focal children. The majority of the intertextual links documented were ones that were made during interviews, and the intertextual links made during classroom experiences were made largely through prompting by the teacher during whole class discussions during or after read alouds. Some findings of this study support and are consistent with the underlying theory and research studies related to reader response, intertextuality and sociocultural learning. Other findings raise consideration for classroom practices in reading instruction and in facilitating intertextual connections to aid in comprehension and scaffolding reading ability and literacy development.

Intertextuality

To address the findings of my first question, the kinds of intertextual links made by children during classroom reading experiences were links by literary elements and genre, source texts, and prompted and spontaneous links. These links were intricately tied as each connection the students made by literary elements or genre included source texts used in making the links, and were either spontaneously made by the children or were prompted through open-ended or direct questioning.

Literary Elements and Genre. Previous studies suggested that using text sets and literature related by theme can be beneficial in helping students make connections between books they read, and thus may help children develop and build schema for literary elements (Beach, Appleman & Dorsey, 1994; Hartman, 1995; Sipe, 2001). I found this to be the case in my study as well, as the majority of the books read in the classroom were series books. As my interviews focused around a discussion of the books read in class, intertextual links by literary elements were inevitably made. Sipe's (2001) study found that after hearing read alouds of several variants of *Rapunzel*, children's classroom discussions became more sophisticated and their intertextual connections progressed from personal connections to schema building of fairy tales. While the children in my study seemed to already have a schema about genre as evidenced by their responses during an early classroom discussion about genre,

their connections progressed, too, from recognition to more analytical connections. After several discussions of books in a series, the children made generalizations about characters and plot, and again demonstrated knowledge about genre. Sipe's (2000, 2001) studies focused on classroom conversations of read alouds and the intertextual links made, the children in my study made these connections mostly during interviews with me after read alouds and independent reading situations. These at times were prompted through direct questions by me. Beach, et al. (1994) noted that the less able eighth grade students in their study tended to make more intertextual links between character and plot in their mapping exercises. In my study, the links between character and plot were the most predominant kind of link by literary element, and these were made by students of all reading levels. It is important to note that while some character and plot links were made on a basic, literal level, some students made character and plot links on an interpretive and evaluative level as well. While the above-level readers in my study tended to respond literally to the books read in class, after prompting they made more interpretive links. One below-level reader did not read the same series books as the rest of the class, the connections he made from the picture books read aloud to him were more of connecting personally to characters. The other below-level reader struggled with chapter books during independent reading. Despite this, he was able to make basic connections by noting repeat characters, and usually guessed about the plot based on book titles, cover illustrations, working with others on response assignments, and by listening to Mrs. Ryan summarize portions previously read. The on-level

readers discussed books with less prompting from me, and made generalizations about the characters and how they might expect that character to behave in future books. The on-level readers also verbalized their personal opinions about the characters and related their actions to themselves or people they knew. Beach, et al. (1994) noted that the more able students in their study tended to define links in terms of specific themes, and compared form and genre between texts. Similarly, in my study the students compared form and genre between texts, although the word and concept of “theme” was never directly used with them by their teacher or by me.

This study also supports Applebee’s (1978) findings that children this age develop expectations about actions and events that appear in stories as well as being able to give reasons for liking or disliking stories. Applebee (1978) also noted that children were very literal in responding to literature until the ages of twelve to fifteen, and could only then discuss motives of characters, examine the structure of literature, or see literature as a way of discussing life. The findings in my study contradict that assumption as the children did discuss those very items. During our interviews, we discussed motives of characters, examined the structure of literature (picture books, chapter books, fairytales, non-fiction), and discussed real life issues and experiences when responding to the texts they read. The on-level children drew on personal experiences and culture as they commented on characters, or made predictions about what might happen next in their books. They made connections to the structure of the literature by comparing picture books to chapter books. The children clearly

articulated why they preferred to read picture books to chapter books, and noted the main reasons they preferred picture books. The pictures made the story more fun, were used as a resource to figure out unknown words, and they were easier to read.

Sipe (2001) noted that picture books rely equally on printed text and illustrations to convey meaning, thus we should expect illustrations to play an important role as children make meaning through picture book read alouds. The children in his study looked at illustrations between the characters from *Rapunzel* variants, and compared how the characters were portrayed in each. Similarly, in my study, when looking at the Little Pigs variants, the illustrations were a way to determine who the main character was, and to express how the vibrant illustrations of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* made it more fun to read than the original. The students in my study also compared different ways to portray characters, and made personal connections to the pictures they saw. As visual and performing arts are being recognized more and more as a valuable way to convey meaning, and are now standards in many elementary language arts programs, this finding contributes the potential of viewing illustrations and creating meaning from not only the particular text at hand, but also between texts. Making connections between illustrations can be a way to help children look at art and visual texts and to think about and explore the use of visual elements in telling stories and gleaning information from the different texts they read. Further, children need to connect visual images to the print in the books they read. As they read books with little to no visual support of

illustrations, it is important that they develop strategies to create images in their heads as they read. Also, listening to picture books read aloud also provided the opportunity to hear the teacher change voices for characters, and use intonation and inflection to enhance the story's meaning. It is important as well, then, for children to learn to create a voice in their heads from the perspective of the storyteller.

Making intertextual connections to point of view is a literary element link that has not been addressed in previous studies. The reasons for this could be that point of view was not a focus of classroom or interview discussions. Perhaps considering who was telling the story was not something participants in previous studies saw as important as other elements such as character, plot and theme. The children in my study were explicitly told that *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* was told from the Wolf's point of view, and that Nate the Great told his stories, and that Doug told the stories in Horrible Harry books. The children connected first person point of view between Nate and the Wolf, and recognized who was telling the story after reading several series books with the same narrator. The children developed a schema for first person point of view, but were not clear about objective, or third person point of view. Considering point of view is crucial in helping children become critical thinkers and readers. When reading, thinking about who is telling the story is so important in considering how characters and events are being portrayed. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* does this in a humorous way, and the idea that the story

might be different if someone else was telling it, is important to consider with each book read.

Using literature that is connected by theme, or using series books can be useful in helping children make intertextual connections. However, just presenting these books to students will not guarantee that the children are internalizing connections on a subconscious level. Classroom activities need to facilitate aesthetic reading and engaging dialogue and response about the books read in a more visible way. Many (2004) suggested that responses such as these from an aesthetic stance were associated with higher levels of understanding. Hartman (1995) also suggested that prior knowledge is something that is used and reconstructed during reading, not just something readers bring with them, and this seemed to be the case in my study. Again, the children demonstrated their thinking and understanding mostly during interviews, and this was something that could have potentially been used during class discussions and activities. As Wilhelm (1995) noted, experiences like this in the classroom can help less engaged readers into the secrets of engaged reading. Lehman and Scharer (1996) also noted that children may be more analytical in their responses when they engage in discussion. This was the case in my study, only the discussion was often with me and not the rest of the class. Previous studies recognized that children make connections between reading experiences when writing (Cairney, 1990, 1992; Bearse, 1992; Spivey & King, 1994). I submit that beyond adapting genre from reading to writing experiences, it is promising to also have children analyze and discuss literary elements such as character

traits and development, plot lines, illustration style, and point of view, from a variety of books read. The point is to instill the notion that there is creativity and choice involved in writing and they can use these elements as they develop their own stories with their own characters in their own exciting situations, rather than writing a new version of someone else's story.

Source Texts. Hartman's (1995) study with high school juniors and seniors characterized resources in making intertextual links as found within a (written) text (primary endogenous), linked to a previous text read (secondary endogenous), and outside the task he was giving the participants (exogenous). The children in my study utilized secondary endogeneous and exogenous resources, characterized as media sources and personal source texts respectively. Perhaps making predictions could be considered using a primary endogenous resource, and this source was used during classroom discussions as well as during interviews, although these kinds of connections are within a text and not between another text. Nevertheless, again, as our discussions during interviews revolved around the books read in class, a constant source text was books and the students connected these to media and personal texts. Media sources included books, movies, video games, songs, and cultural signs. Personal text sources were connecting texts to one's background knowledge and personal experiences. The children made connections to personal texts during and after readalouds as these kinds of links were prompted by their teacher. These were the most prevalent kind of source text linked during classroom discussions. The children also made these kinds of links during interviews, either spontaneously

or through prompting. As with links by literary elements, these kinds of connections ranged from being superficial (for example, knowing someone with the same name as a character), to analytical when making predictions about a story line based on personal experiences, and evaluating characters' actions based on personal or cultural values. The above-level readers and the below-level readers tended to make superficial connections to personal text sources while it was the on-level readers who more often drew on personal experiences to connect to and interpret stories. There were some connections between books and other media during classroom discussion, and only one reference by the teacher to a television show. The main connection between the books they read was when they learned about Marc Brown and how he illustrated his books. Other than that, there were no discussions or comparisons about the different books they read. However, during interviews I explicitly asked the children to tell me about the books they read and to make connections between books, thus the many links by literary elements. Therefore, the source texts used in making connections during interviews were often between books. As Hartman (1995) pointed out, comprehension includes making sense of texts in reference to previous reading experiences. Further, prior knowledge (or personal text sources) was used by some students purposefully to help make sense of texts, and not just something they brought with them. As with his participants, the children in my study were able to manipulate their knowledge in specific situations, and were strategic in their linking. While good readers may do this on a sub-conscious level (spontaneously), this was something that all the

children could do after some prompting. While the above-level readers were resistant in making intertextual links and going beyond the literal events in one particular book, they, too, did this after direct questioning. Having students make explicit connections between books and prompting them to think about the connections promotes a deeper understanding about what they read and facilitates a dialogue wherein students can share their perspectives and insights. The fact that children are exposed to, and are consumers of, a variety of media is something that teachers can take advantage of to make connections to reading experiences as well as a means to integrate the language arts processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representation. This may also help children develop into more thoughtful and critical consumers of the television shows and other media signs they encounter on a daily basis.

Spontaneous and prompted links. Spontaneous links can reveal a child's understanding and provide a teachable moment or opportunity for a discussion, provided that the teacher can relate it back to the book being read. The classroom environment should facilitate discussion that includes making spontaneous comments, some of which can be useful in making intertextual links to the reading experience. In Sipe's studies (2000, 2001) it appeared that the teacher facilitated spontaneous connections by encouraging the children to take the lead; and only asking questions to probe or clarify what the children were saying. In my study, there were not many documented spontaneous links during readalouds. The children seemed to be listening attentively, and answered questions when asked. During interviews, some children made

spontaneous links as part of a conversation about the book, and used those links purposefully to predict events in stories or evaluate characters' actions and to support their opinions. This suggests that these children have developed a good sense of story structure and potential alternatives in plot. Other spontaneous links were noted during literature circles, and served to get the students off on a tangent during reading and begin discussing personal experiences without tying it into what they were reading. There was no further connection to the story they read. Teachers need to consider when to build upon the spontaneous links children make to enhance understanding of the text, and when to prompt children into using their background knowledge and experiences (personal experiences and experiences with text) to enhance, question, and make sense of what they are reading.

Other studies on intertextuality included prompting children into making connections through reading connected literature and passages, and then responding during interviews through think alouds, freewrites, and making semantic maps connecting them (Beach, et. al 1994; Hartman, 1995). The children in my study were prompted to make intertextual links during classroom experiences as well as during interviews. The prompted links during classroom reading experiences were ones mostly made through personal connections to books. These links seemed to prompt the children into relating to a character or situation in the story. It may have been beneficial, too, to prompt children directly and purposefully into making connections to other text sources, including other books and media, and have children go outside of themselves a

bit to become more analytical and aware of the connections between books and media as art forms and as modes of communication.

During interviews, connections were made not only to personal text sources, but to other books and media. The links to literary elements using a variety of source texts documented during interviews is evidence that children can make these connections when prompted, and they can think about the texts they read in different ways. Prompting children into making intertextual connections can help make their understandings (and misunderstandings) become more visible, and steer their thinking in a direction they may not have considered on their own. In sum, children may be making intertextual connections on a sub-conscious level while reading; and classroom experiences need to include opportunities to manifest these links, and to provoke children into making connections that serve to help create meaning from what they read. That is, making intertextual connections needs to be a part of the classroom discourse.

The Social Construction of Meaning

Galda and Beach (2001) noted that students learn to respond to literature as they acquire various social practices, identities, and tools through participation in interpretive communities. Through participation in classroom experiences, children tacitly learn what is valued in their classroom community and adapt to (or rebel against) those values. To address the findings of my second question, the children seemed to acknowledge the links that were made during discussions of readalouds, and this amounted to whether or not the focal

child remembered their classmate sharing a personal anecdote. During interviews, the children at times remembered connections made by others, but not on a significant level that contributed to understanding the books. While Mrs. Ryan never explicitly told the students *not* to talk while partner-reading or during literature circles, she did not explicitly encourage them to discuss the book with each other, either. She was clear about how to do partner-reading and literature circles and gave the children their response assignments to complete. The assignments, however, became the focus of the reading experiences. The children were very obedient in the way they read their books during partner reading and then went back to their own seats to answer the questions, and they seemed to develop that routine on their own. During self-directed literature circles, the children decided that each child would take a turn reading, and then answering a response question on a worksheet. Whatever that person wanted to write for the answer to the next question on the sheet, they would all write. There was no debate or discussion, just an efficient way of getting the job done. Beach et al. (1994) noted that learning to define intertextual links is a learned discourse practice, and this was evident in my study. Again, making connections between books and other texts is something that needs to be a part of classroom dialogue. As the links that were disregarded were done so because of unfamiliarity with a source text, the discourse of the classroom community needs to be one in which intertextual links are acknowledged and discussed between children. It may be revealed that children are unfamiliar with particular source texts, and that can be a focus of discussion and clarification so that an

opportunity for making an intertextual link is not disregarded by the children, and can be seen as valued by their teacher. The children in my study mostly remembered comments made by their teacher when discussing books, and how the teacher facilitates discussions and organizes experiences with books can influence what the children see as worthwhile in making connections.

It was interesting to me that the above-level readers tended to respond to reading experiences more efferently than aesthetically (Rosenblatt, 1978) for some reason. According to Beach's (1993) response perspectives, these above-level readers responded primarily from a textual stance. These students responded objectively and often cited the text during our discussions. I feel these children could also have been responding from a social stance, that is from their roles as students in the classroom, and felt that they needed to have the right answer. The on-level readers were more aesthetic in their responses and made deeper personal connections to the stories they read. They also responded from a psychological, cultural and social stance when questioning the actions of the characters, and evaluating the books themselves. One below-level reader tended to respond efferently when it came to discussing books read independently, and often based his responses about the books presented in class on something someone else had said. He appeared to just want to survive reading time and get it over with, and has told me as much. In this way, he too was responding to the reading experiences from a social stance as his social role as a student. He did not see reading as something to do outside of school. He rarely read during independent reading time, and struggled during partner

reading. In my few interviews with the other below-level reader, he responded aesthetically to the picture books read aloud, and was very animated in his retelling of the stories and made personal connections as well, albeit taking him onto unrelated topics.

The discourse community is a valuable resource and a vital element in creating meaning from classroom experiences. The way children engage with, think about and talk about books is influenced by the experiences provided by the teacher, and the purpose they see in classroom reading experiences. Making use of thematically related material and series texts can be more beneficial when children have the opportunity to make intertextual connections as a part of the way they respond to literature read in the classroom.

Implications

The implications from this study are significant for reading instruction and scaffolding comprehension and reading ability in young readers. Intertextual linking by literary elements and genre, utilizing a variety of source texts, and facilitating spontaneous and prompted links as a regular part of the classroom discourse about books and reading seems promising in helping students not only comprehend texts on a literal level, but to also think about texts more critically on inferential and evaluative levels. However, before expecting children to be able to engage in thoughtful discussions and making connections between books, teachers need to make explicit intertextual links between the different forms of texts children encounter in the classroom, as well as the connections between listening to a story and reading on one's own or with

a partner. In particular, there needs to be scaffolding between reading experiences from using picture books during readalouds to independent reading of chapter books.

Reading ability. For transitional readers such as the ones in my study, making links between text forms may be an important way to scaffold their reading progression. The children went from reading picture books one week to reading Nate the Great chapter books the next week; and from then on, went back and forth between the two text structures. This left one of the focal children floundering during independent reading of chapter books as these were evidently beyond his instructional level. It is so important that children are not given materials to read that will frustrate them. If they can not decode the text, they are not going to make intertextual connections when reading independently. A direct comparison between the different text forms and an advanced organizer about the different challenges they would face as they read more difficult text may help bridge the transition from reading and listening to picture books read aloud to reading chapter books independently. Again, teachers can make explicit comparisons between text forms. Engaging the children in small group shared reading and guided reading experiences may be a helpful way to scaffold children from picture book reading to independent reading. Shared reading includes repeated readings of texts that usually follow a particular pattern, rhyme scheme, or a cumulative tale that is predictable. The text used is on children's instructional reading levels, and instruction focuses on specific features of print as well as modeling appropriate prosody based on punctuation

signals. The teacher begins the reading experiences, and children chime in as they recognize words. Gradually the teacher turns reading over to the children in the group. By the end of the week, the children should be able to read the book independently. Talking about literary elements is a part of the experience as is having children activate schema in preparation to read. Guided reading includes scaffolding children on the same instructional reading level with mini-lessons on reading strategies to decode text, develop vocabulary and develop fluency in reading. Children need to learn self-monitoring strategies to solve reading problems they may encounter during independent reading of more difficult texts, and these skills and strategies definitely need to be addressed in guided reading experiences. Guided reading also includes several readings of the same text, with opportunities to read with a partner and engage in a response activity. Engaging in experiences for imaging and subvocalization as they read is another important factor, otherwise they just see symbols on a page. Responding in artistic ways, including drama and art can help children interpret texts and create pictures and sounds in their heads as they read. Building from read alouds, to shared reading and guided reading to independent reading is necessary for children who need to develop reading strategies and experiences with books.

Comprehension. Using text sets and books related by theme in the classroom setting is a logical way to facilitate intertextual connections between literary elements. We can not assume, however, that because children are presented with related literature that they are making connections from one book

to the next. As stated, children may very well be making connections and developing schema for literature on a sub-conscious level, but these connections need to be manifested and made visible in the classroom. Teachers need to provide opportunities for grand conversations and discussions related to stories they read to reveal spontaneous links the children made through the experience. Grand conversations are true conversations about books and not just a question and answer session. Spontaneous links made through genuine conversations can be used to create meaning to what is being read. It may take time to get children comfortable in engaging in conversations about books, particularly if it is something they have not done in the classroom before. Therefore, teachers may need to intervene and ask questions during discussions that prompt intertextual links as well.

Scaffolding children with explicit guidelines and modeling how to conduct partner and small group discussions about books is necessary to help children think about connections and appreciate and use connections made by others. While literature circles can be a valuable way to facilitate response and making intertextual connections (Short, 1992), teachers need to recognize that they are indeed “response circles” conducted after reading, with books available to revisit during the discussion. Daniels (1994) outlined how these are conducted with each person having a particular role, and bringing something different to the discussion. The roles include a discussion director, who comes prepared with several open-ended questions to promote deep thought, not just yes or no answers. Teachers of young students can engage in modified literature

circles by providing deep, open-ended questions for the children to talk about rather than having the discussion director do that as they may not be developmentally ready to think of higher level questions on their own.

Teachers also need to prompt connections through direct experiences and questioning as well. Teachers need to explicitly address making connections between texts and prompt students into making connections by modeling think-aloud strategies to make connections between texts. They should talk about how a certain book reminds them of something else they read, and ask the students if it does for them, too. Some students appeared to do this on a sub-conscious level without prompting, and it could be an effective way to help children get into the habit of thinking about texts in terms of the other texts they encountered and modify their understandings of each. Having students share their reading experiences with others can be a valuable resource for meaningful conversations and developing understanding as well as hearing about a good book to read. Further, if teachers are using thematic books and text sets, they need to explore explicitly the literary and thematic connections between them. I know many teachers use thematic texts, and I assume they do so because of the possibility to build schema and make intertextual connections. Children need to have scaffolding and direction to facilitate intertextual links at times they are reading independently, with a partner, or during literature circles. Talk related to books read needs to be encouraged, and children need to see reading as more than completing assignments and worksheets in a school setting. They need help in building connections between the reading experiences they have, and use

personal experiences and experiences with other media as a means to explore and make sense of literature, literary elements and techniques, informational texts, and visual texts that they encounter both in school and in society. If children can not do this, they are being left behind. Making connections between school and the world outside of school is important to help children see the purpose and the relevance in the tasks they are instructed to do, and to learn to make informed choices as they grow older.

It is important, too, to think about what is being presented to children to read in the classroom. Not every book presented to children in the classroom will directly relate to their lives, and indeed they shouldn't. The notion of reading as a lived-through experience (Rosenblatt, 1978) suggests that literature can provide new experiences that children can build on with each new book read. Using books from a variety of perspectives and characters with differing social backgrounds can be a valuable way for children to make connections to characters that are different from each other and from themselves. I believe that young children can question, and should question, what they read and develop their own opinions about the books they read and the characters they encounter. This is something that needs to be done in the classroom. Exploring questions such as who is telling the story, or how would this be different if the main character was a different gender, brings social and cultural considerations into the process of meaning making. Comprehension includes building on prior knowledge and previous reading experiences, it is important to have children directly relate their new reading experiences to previous reading experiences to

help develop an understanding of literary elements, and genre. Furthermore, by allowing and expecting children to voice their opinions (beyond just identifying a similar experience), understandings, and developing their own taste in literature is more important (and personally fulfilling) in the long run than making superficial connections to characters and situations in the short run.

Limitations

It is important to address the limitations in this study. First of all, the majority of the books involved were fictional stories. It was my intention to gather more data on the intertextual connections children made with informational books as well, but a much smaller amount of data were collected on them. Further studies could explore intertextual linking with informational books. These studies on intertextuality in the context of classroom experiences might focus on how children make connections related across the curriculum in other disciplines, such as math and science. Another limitation is that data collection included the child's ability to articulate links and understanding during interviews. While I asked pointed questions to glean insight into the child's thinking, other methods of gathering data could be useful as well. For example, having the child complete mapping activities, or drawing and writing responses to gather data may reveal other kinds of links made. Another limitation to the study is the scope. This was conducted with one class and while there were important findings for discussion, the results may not be generalizable. The students were, for the most, homogenous in that they all were middle class and all were fluent in English. Studying intertextuality and

the connections made with English Learners, a growing and important population in American schools, may be valuable in helping teachers effectively address their needs. Finally, a study to explore teachers' understanding of intertextuality and the ways they organize their reading instruction to provide opportunities to make intertextual links both through reading experiences and the classroom discourse can be insightful into seeing if, and how important teachers see this in helping students become literate.

In sum, intertextuality and the social construction of meaning is important in helping children develop into literate, democratic citizens. Teachers still have the power, for the most part, to make their classrooms places to share, explore, discuss, and analyze literature and texts that children are exposed to in their classrooms and the outside world. Having children learn to make connections as part of how they respond to, understand, and discuss texts with others can promote higher order thinking and understanding in an ever changing global society. Teachers need to cherish the responsibility for effectively teaching their students, and for making sound instructional decisions that include engaging their students in personally and academically meaningful literacy experiences that promote making connections and building on prior knowledge in a practical, authentic way. What an important job that is indeed.

References

- Allen, G. (2000). Intertextuality. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Applebee, A. (1978). A child's concept of story: Ages two to seventeen. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). The dialogic imagination. (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Barthes, R. (1974) S/Z. (Trans. Richard Miller) New York, NY: Hill and Wang.
- Barton, D. (1994). Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Beach, R.; Appleman, D. & Dorsey, S. (1994). Adolescents' uses of intertextual links to understand literature. In Ruddell, R.; Ruddell, M.; & Singer H. (Eds.) Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading, 4th ed. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. 695-714.
- Beach, R. & Anson, C. (1992). Stance and intertextuality in written discourse. Linguistics and Education 4. 335-357.
- Beach, R. (1993). A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Bear, D.; Invernizzi, M.; Templeton, S.; & Johnson, F. (2004). Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, Merrill, Prentice Hall.
- Bearse, C. (1992). The fairy tale connection in children's stories: Cinderella

- Meets Sleeping Beauty. The Reading Teacher 45(9). 688-695.
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966). The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In the Sociology of Knowledge. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Bloome, D. & Egan-Robertson, A. (1993). The social construction of intertextuality in classroom reading and writing lessons. Reading Research Quarterly 28(4). 305-332.
- Bloome, D. & Carter, S. (2001). Lists in reading education reform. Theory into Practice 40(1). 150-157.
- Cairney, T. (1990). Intertextuality: Infectious echoes from the past. The Reading Teacher. 478-484.
- Cairney, T. (1992). Fostering and building students' intertextual histories. Language Arts 69. 502-507.
- Clay, M. (1972). Reading: The patterning of complex behaviour. Auckland: Heinemann.
- Daniels, H. (1994). Literature circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered Classroom. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Duke, N. (1999). The scarcity of informational texts in first grade. Center for The improvement of Early Reading Achievement. 1-42.
- Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York, NY: Herder & Herder.
- Freire, P. & Macedo, D. (1987). Literacy: Reading the word and the world. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

- Galda, L. & Beach, R. (2001). Response to literature as a cultural activity.
Reading Research Quarterly(36) 1. 64-73
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. New York, NY: Aldine.
- Halliday, M. (1978). Language as Social Semiotic. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hartman, D. (1992). Intertextuality and reading: The text, the reader, the author and the context. Linguistics and Education 4. 295-311.
- Hartman, D. (1995). Eight readers reading: The intertextual links of proficient readers reading multiple passages. Reading Research Quarterly 30(3). 520-561.
- Kristeva, J. (1980). Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Lehman & Scharer (1996). Teachers' perspectives on response comparisons when children and adults read children's literature.
- Leistyna, Woodrum & Sherblom (1996).
- Lemke, J. (1992). Intertextuality and educational research. Linguistics and Education 4. 257-267.
- Luke, A.; O'Brien, J.; & Comber, B. (2001). Making community texts objects of study. In Fehring, H. & Green, P. (Eds.) Critical Literacy: A Collection of Articles from the Australian Literacy Educators' Association. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. 112-123.
- Many, J. (1992). An exhibition and analysis of verbal tapestries: Understanding how scaffolding is woven into the fabric of instructional conversations.

Reading Research Quarterly(37) 4. 376-407.

Many, J. (1996). Patterns of selectivity in drawing on sources: Examining students' use of intertextuality across literacy events. Reading Research and Instruction 36(1). 51-63.

National Center for Educational Statistics (2000). NAEP 1999 trends in academic progress: Three decades of student performance.

Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Educational Statistics (2003). The Nation's report card: Fourth-grade reading highlights 2002. Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of Education.

No Child Left Behind Act (2001).

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/legislation.html

Oldfather & Dahl (1994). Toward a social constructivist reconceptualization of intrinsic motivation for literacy learning. Journal of reading behavior 26(2). 139-157.

Oyler, C. & Barry, A. (1996). Intertextual connections in read-alouds of information Books. Language Arts 73. 324-329.

Rosenblatt, L. (1939). Literature as exploration. New York, NY: Appleton-Century Crofts.

Rosenblatt, L. (1978). The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Short, K. (1992). Researching intertextuality within collaborative classroom learning Environments. Linguistics and Education 4. 313-333.

- Sipe, L. (2000). "Those two gingerbread boys could be brothers": How Children use intertextual connections during storybook readalouds. Children's Literature in Education 31(2). 73-89.
- Sipe, L (2001). A palimpsest of stories: Young children's construction of intertextual links among fairytale variants. Reading Research and Instruction 40(4). 333-352.
- Strauss, A. (1987). Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Spivey & King (1994). Readers as writers composing from sources. In Ruddell, R., Ruddell, M. & Singer, H. (Eds.) Theoretical models and processes of Reading, 4th ed. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. 637-652.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Trousdale & McMillan (2003). Cinderella was a wuss: A young girl's responses to feminist and patriarchal folktales. Children's Literature in Education(34) 1. 1-28.
- Villume S. & Hopkins L. (1995). A transactional and sociocultural view of response in a fourth-grade literature discussion group.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. (1991) Voices of the Mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilhelm, J. (1995). You gotta be the book: Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents. New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

APPENDIX

Appendix A : Parent Information Letter

Dear Parent:

My name is Joanne McKay and I am a doctoral student under the direction of Professor Sara Ann Beach in the Department of Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus. I would like to invite your child to participate in a research study entitled, "Intertextuality and the Social Construction of Meaning." The purpose of the study is to learn about the kinds of connections child make as they create meaning from classroom reading experiences. I will choose six focal children to participate in the study with varying degrees of reading achievement.

I will be visiting your child's classroom from Monday through Thursday for about 12 weeks for an hour each day. I will begin by having the participants complete a six- question questionnaire individually as I read the questions (see attached). I will be taking audiotapes of the observations, taking notes, and audio taping interviews with participating children. The interviews will take about ten to fifteen minutes and will afford children the opportunity to think and reflect on their learning. Participating children will be interviewed three times during the study.

Your child's participation will be anonymous and, aside from the initial questionnaire and individual interviews, it will be conducted in the context of his/her normal classroom experiences and routine. I will use the information obtained from the interviews, audio tapes, and notes taking during the observation to write my dissertation and will use pseudonyms for any references made to any child in the classroom. The audiotapes will be listened to by me and will be destroyed after the dissertation is written.

The benefits of the study will include gaining deeper understand of how students make meaning from various texts through social interaction as well as through texts they have previously read. Your child's participation can help the education community learn from them, and explore implications to better address how to support children as they become literate members of society.

Attached is a parental permission form to indicate whether or not your child may participate in this study. Please read it carefully and decide whether it is okay for your child to participate. Please return the form with your child to Mrs. Plummer tomorrow, even if you choose not to have your child participate. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Joanne McKay

Appendix B: Informed Consent Document

Informed Consent Form for Research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

INTRODUCTION: This study is entitled, “Intertextuality and the Social Construction of Meaning”. The person directing this project is Joanne McKay, a doctoral student in the College of Education. Dr. Sara Ann Beach is her doctoral chair. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY: This study is a naturalistic inquiry into intertextuality and the meaning-making of second grade students during various classroom experiences. Intertextuality is a term that is used in literacy research to describe a wide range of relationships within and between texts (literary texts as well as music, drama, film, and any sign communicating meaning) and the people who engage with these texts. The purpose of this study is to examine the kinds of intertextual links made by children and how and why they create meaning through those links. For this study I will observe six children during classroom reading experiences for one hour each day for ten weeks. I will choose six focal children to interview and observe in depth. These six children will complete a questionnaire to obtain information on their social and academic relationships. The time taken from class activities for this will be less than fifteen minutes and will give your child a chance to reflect on how they perceive their peers. I will administer the questionnaire at the beginning of the study, and again at the middle of the study (after five weeks). I will then take field notes and will interview the focal children individually for a period of ten to fifteen minutes after each event. The time taken away from class activities during the interviews will be minimal. The maximum time for your child’s interview will be a fifteen-minute block of time, once per week for ten weeks. The data will be analyzed for underlying themes and patterns in how children construct meaning through social interaction and making connections when reading different texts and will be used to help me write my doctoral dissertation.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The benefits include engaging your child in thinking about his/her understanding and learning during classroom experiences. Another benefit includes helping educators gain insight into how children make meaning from text through their previous reading experiences as well as through social interaction, and addressing ways to better support children as they develop as literate members of society. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study beyond those present in routine classroom life.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty to your child. Furthermore, your child may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your child will be asked

to participate in addition to your agreement for their participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Any reference to your child when citing the findings of the study will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used in place of your child's real name.

AUDIO TAPING OF STUDY ACTIVITIES: To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews will be recorded on an audio recording device. Participants have the right to refuse to all such taping without penalty. If you do not consent to audio taping, your child will still be interviewed and notes will be taken. Audiotapes will be listened to only by the researcher and will be destroyed after the dissertation is completed.

Please select one of the following options:

- ☐ I consent to the use of audio recording my child's interview.
☐ I do not consent to the use of audio recording my child's interview.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: Parents may contact Joanne McKay at 360-1534 or jmckay@ou.edu or Sara Ann Beach, Ph.D. at 325-1498 or sbeach@ou.edu with questions about the study. For inquiries about rights as a research participant, contact the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN PERMISSION: I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study.

Check one:

_____ I AGREE
_____ I DO NOT AGREE

To have my child _____ participate in the above
(Print Name)

described research project.

Parent's signature

Date

Parent's printed name

Researcher's signature

Appendix C: Child Assent

Mrs. McKay will be visiting my classroom for the next ten weeks. She is doing a research study about the kinds of connections me and my classmates make between the different books we read, and how we learn from each other. Six of us will be chosen to be focus children during reading experiences and to be interviewed after those reading experiences. She will have the six focal children complete a questionnaire about our class, take notes, and interview some of us each day that will also be audio taped. No one but Mrs. McKay will listen to the audiotapes. I do not have to be audio taped, and I do not have to talk to her in an interview. I understand that I can stop being in her study any time I want to. If I do let Mrs. McKay audiotape me, or make notes about me in her paper, I know my real name will not be used when she writes her paper. I also know my teacher will not listen to audiotapes at all and she will not see the questionnaire or notes that Mrs. McKay takes when visiting my class.

Check one:

_____ I want to be a part of Mrs. McKay's research study.

_____ I do not want to be a part of Mrs. McKay's research study.

Your Name: _____

Appendix D : Sociogram Questionnaire

Name_____

1. Who are two classmates that you like to sit near?
2. List three people from your class who you most like to play with at recess.
3. If you were going on a vacation, which one of your classmates would you most like to take with you?
4. List three people from your class that you don't usually play with at recess.
5. List three people with whom you would like to be in a reading group.
6. Who do you think is the best reader in the class? You can say yourself.