Talking about a Text: The Effects of Scaffolding Questions on Oral Discussion Skills of English Language Learners

Heather Marley

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Dr. Marian Graeven Peter
(Advisor)

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Abstract

This study analyzes the effects of two teacher-questioning strategies on the oral language skills of English Language Learners. The two interventions tested were anticipation guides and coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions (Kim, 2010). An action research study was designed to increase the quality of student output during text-based discussions in a Seventh Grade reading class. Twelve students participated in a text-based discussion once a week for six weeks. One group received anticipation guides as an intervention, another group received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention, and a final group received no intervention. The findings indicate that coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions are a more effective intervention than anticipation guides in supporting English Language Learners as they develop their oral language skills.
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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

English Language Learners are growing rapidly in number in public schools across the United States. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, many of these English Language Learners, or students that speak a language other than English at home, are enrolled in a bilingual program. These bilingual programs provide instruction in both Spanish and English, with the emphasis on English increasing throughout a student’s academic career. While students work to develop proficiency in English, they often fall behind their English-speaking peers in higher-level activities, such as text-based discussions or academic writing (Cowgill, 2009). This study analyzes the effects of targeted, teacher-directed strategies on the oral language development of middle school English Language Learners during text-based discussions. The study attempts to answer the following research question: What is the effect of scaffolding teacher questions on oral discussion skills of English Language Learners?

The twelve participants in this study were seventh grade English Language Learners with varying levels of English proficiency. All of the participants were enrolled in a bilingual program in which they receive fifty percent of their instruction in English and fifty percent of their instruction in Spanish. The participants were chosen randomly from a pool of students in one seventh-grade reading class. The mean age of the participants was 12.7 years, and the range age of the participants was one year. The English proficiency levels ranged from a LAU level three to a LAU level five. Students with a LAU level of three have basic conversation and reading skills in English; however, they may struggle with academic language. Students with a LAU level of five are close to
native-like English proficiency in casual settings, but they still do not have native-like proficiency in academic settings.

The study was conducted during a six-week period, and data was collected during the first, third, and sixth week. The twelve participants were randomly assigned to one of three intervention groups. The first group received anticipation guides as an intervention, the second group received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention, and the third group received no intervention. The purpose of the three groups was to test two teacher-scaffolding strategies in order to determine the most effective way of helping students develop oral discussion skills in English.

In order to answer this question, two research-based, teacher-questioning strategies were tested. The first tested strategy was anticipation guides, or a short, teacher-directed pre-discussion that attempts to activate students’ prior knowledge. According to Navarro (2010), anticipation guides give English Language Learners more confidence to participate in oral discussions because they are given support in comprehension before the discussion begins. The second tested strategy was coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions. These three types of questions are designed to provide students with real-time training and feedback during the discussion. According to Kim (2010), coaching questions set expectations for the discussion, facilitating questions deepen students’ understanding, and collaborating questions help students discuss independently without much teacher support. Furthermore, this strategy provides a teacher-directed framework to help English Language Learners structure their responses throughout a text-based discussion. The third group of participants acted as a control group and did not receive a research-based, teacher-questioning strategy.
In addition to supporting the needs of language development, this study supports the Speaking and Listening Standards outlined by the Common Core State Standards. According to the Common Core, “Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). English Language Learners need teacher-directed instruction in order to reach the rigorous standards set by the Common Core. This study attempts to provide insight into strategies for teacher-directed instruction to help bridge the gap between English Language Learners and their English-speaking peers.

The next chapter provides a summary of all relevant research to this study. The following three chapters detail the methodology, results, and conclusions of this study.
CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

English Language Learners are growing in numbers in classrooms across the United States. These learners need instructional support so that they meet academic content standards while acquiring and developing the English language. A particular challenge for these unique learners is participating in class discussions. English Language Learners tend to struggle with text-based discussions, putting them at a disadvantage when compared to their native English-speaking peers (Sevigny, 2012). The classroom teacher can use explicit strategies to help bridge the gap between English Language Learners and English speakers in the mainstream classroom (Sevigny, 2012, p. 189). This action research study analyzes the effects of two different teacher-questioning scaffolds (anticipation guides and coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions) on the oral language development of English Language Learners.

Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature. The purpose of this chapter is to support the research question associated with this study: What are the effects of scaffolding questions on the oral language development of English Language Learners? The studies provide relevant insights into what is effective instruction for English Language Learners as well as strategies that serve as scaffolds for all students when discussing a text.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In each section, I summarize the relevant research and discuss the implications for the present study. Section One examines three studies that have investigated effective scaffolding techniques for Oral
Language Development. Section Two summarizes relevant research regarding the improvement of discussion skills for English Language Learners. The five studies included in Section Two serve as the foundation for the methods of my study, as they present the research-based scaffolding strategies that I used in order to collect data. Finally, Section Three summarizes four studies regarding student anxiety towards speaking a second language.

Section One: Effective Scaffolding Techniques for Oral Language Development

Introduction

Section One includes three recent studies surrounding the effectiveness of various scaffolding techniques for oral language development. The first study analyzed the effects of three questioning techniques used by foreign language teachers: yes or no questions, closed and display questions, and open and referential questions (Yang, 2010). The authors of the second study compared three different post-reading questioning techniques and their effects on comprehension in a middle school classroom (Liang, Watkins, Graves, & Hosp, 2010). These techniques are story maps, anthology questions, and no questioning. This study proved that story maps are an important questioning technique for text comprehension. The researcher of the final study in Section One analyzed the scaffolds that teachers used when guiding their ESL classrooms in oral discussions (Kim, 2008). All three of the studies included in section one provide information on questioning scaffolds used to design the comprehension and discussion questions in the present study.
The first study in this section discusses effective questioning techniques for oral language development. The summary that follows outlines the methodology, results, and conclusions of this study.

**Effective Questioning Techniques for Oral Language Development**

The study conducted by Yang (2010) examined the usage of three types of questioning techniques that foreign language teachers used to promote oral language development in their classrooms: yes/no questions, closed and display questions, and open and referential questions. Yes/no questions are questions in which the response is a simple yes or no. Closed and display questions are questions in which there is only one correct answer that the teacher knows. In this type of questioning, the teacher aims to check if the student knows the correct answer. Open and referential questions are questions in which the teacher does not know the correct answers and students give the teacher answers to contribute to a body of information. The purpose of the study was to decide whether there is a correlation between the type of question asked and the quality of output provided by the student. Yang hypothesized that teachers would mostly use yes/no questions and close and display questions and that these questions would result in low output from the students.

To complete this study, Yang analyzed recordings of three ESL teachers with limited classroom experience. The three teachers were assigned to three different secondary schools, and the evidence was gathered from three classes of students. Yang recorded one class session with each teacher and transcribed the whole group portion of the lesson, as well any small group or partner discussions. To analyze the transcriptions,
Yang coded the questions, categorized them by question type, and analyzed the trends in student output from each type of question.

Yang found that teachers almost always asked yes/no or closed and display questions in order to check for understanding. As a result, most student output from these lessons was limited to responses that were three words or less. When teachers used open and referential questions, students said between four and twelve words. Yang concluded that in language classrooms where yes/no and closed and display questions are the main type of questioning used, students have very little opportunity to engage in speaking the language and the lesson becomes structured around teacher talk rather than student talk. Yang concluded that (a) teachers should use yes/no and closed and display questions only as a means to reach higher level questioning such as open and referential questions and (b) teachers should follow up yes/no and closed and display questions with an additional question that asks students to elaborate.

The next study in this section further analyzes the effectiveness of teacher questioning by comparing several forms of post-reading questioning.

**Post-Reading Questioning**

The study conducted by (Liang, Watkins, Graves, & Hosp, 2010) compared the effects of three different post-reading questioning techniques on middle school students’ comprehension of a literary text: a story map, anthology questions, and no questions. Story maps are “a set of questions that aid understanding of the key events in a story or text if it does not take place spontaneously during reading” (p. 349). Story maps help students understand the gist, or the essence, of a story so that they are prepared to discuss the text. Anthology questions are generally interpretative comprehension questions that
may be out of order or may require inferences. Story maps differ from anthology questions because they are often written in sequential order and when answered, they assure that students understand all of the main ideas presented in a text. The researchers hoped to prove that story maps are an effective scaffolding technique to help students comprehend a text.

To complete the study, the researchers chose eighty-seven students from three different Language Arts classrooms in two middle schools. They then arranged the students into three groups. The authors chose three short stories from a middle school literature anthology. Before giving the texts to the teachers, the authors reprinted the text, removing all pictures so that they could collect valid information about the students’ comprehension. Each week the three groups read the same story, and each group participated in one of three instructional strategies: no post reading questioning, anthology questioning, or a story map. Over a three-week period, each group participated in all three forms of questioning. Each week, the students read the texts independently and the researchers collected comprehension data through a multiple-choice assessment and a student attitude survey.

The results of the study showed that students who participated in a story map enjoyed the story more and comprehended the story better than students did not participate in post reading questioning or those who completed anthology questions, regardless of the story. Students also reported that they felt more comfortable with their understanding of the story after completing a story map. Although the results favored the researchers’ hypothesis, the difference in comprehension between anthology questions and story maps was not enough to conclude that story maps are more effective as a post
reading strategy. The authors concluded that a story map is one effective scaffold to help students comprehend a text; however, it is not necessarily the only scaffold that teachers should use in middle school literacy classrooms.

The final study in this section differs from this study in that it discusses ways in which teachers can structure their own speech when facilitating a text-based discussion.

**Meaningful Teacher Talk in ESL Classrooms**

The study conducted by Kim (2008) investigated meaningful teacher talk in English as a Second Language, or ESL, classrooms. It focused on scaffolding strategies that ESL teachers use to promote talk in English classrooms with adult learners. According to the Kim, “Scaffolded teacher talk is understood as a pedagogical, discursive strategy with which the teacher verbally interacts with the students and helps them to learn the target language in addition to accomplishing a language-learning task that they cannot do on their own” (p. 7). Two research questions guided this study: (a) what is the nature of teacher-student verbal interaction during classroom instructional time? (b) In what way, if any, does the teacher’s talk scaffold her students’ learning English?

To complete the study, Kim analyzed on ESL teacher’s scaffolded talk throughout a four-week period. The class was comprised of 16 adult international learners of various backgrounds who were learning English for professional purposes. Kim collected data from class observations, interviews, and documents. In addition, the author observed fifteen hours of classes on eight different days. Kim created audio recording of the sessions and interviewed several students after each session. Afterwards, the author transcribed all sessions and analyzed the teacher-student interactions thematically. All data was qualitative.
Kim categorized the teacher’s talk in four parts: comfortable talk, dialogic talk, mediated talk, and purposeful talk. The author asserts that the first level of the scaffold was comfortable talk. In other words, the teacher created a safe space when guiding classroom discussion so that all students felt comfortable to participate. Next, the teacher’s talk was dialogic; her talk was focused on teacher-student interaction. The teacher scaffolded the discussion so that the students and teacher were equal partners in creating a conversation. The questions gradually became more difficult but the teacher always remained an equal member of the conversation. Third, the teacher’s talk was mediated, meaning that she scaffolded all questions and statements so that they clear to the students. For example, the teacher often asked each question in several different ways with different grammatical structures, allowing students to hear several levels of language and respond to the question that they best understood. The teacher also emphasized important words in each question and rephrased student responses. The final scaffold was purposeful talk. In other words, the teacher created procedures and rituals for classroom discussions such as rhythmic repetition and classroom discussion norms. The students became accustomed to the flow of oral discussions and were more likely to participate meaningfully.

Kim concluded that there are multiple dimensions when teachers scaffold talk in the language classroom and that these dimensions greatly affect student outcomes. While there were many examples of transcriptions that supported the categories, this study lacks quantitative data that reflects whether student outcomes improved as a result of these teacher talk strategies. In contrast, the other two studies in this section provide quantitative data that prove the effectiveness of the given strategies.
Synthesis of Section One

The three articles summarized in section one investigated effective scaffolding techniques for oral language development. While the studies are not all targeted specifically towards the development of English Language Learners, they all provide important conclusions that are relevant to the present study. The study by Yang (2010) compared three types of questions: yes or no questions, closed and display questions, and open and referential questions. The second study by Liang, Watkins, Graves, and Hosp (2010) investigated the effectiveness of story maps and anthology questions as they relate to middle school students’ comprehension of a text. The final study presented in section one by Kim (2008) concluded that specific teacher-talk scaffolding could aid in the oral language development for English Language Learners.

The researchers of the three studies in section one assert the following: (a) Teachers should carefully plan and scaffold their questions in order to promote the highest levels of oral discussion and comprehension of a text and (b) teachers can plan their own talk in order to better facilitate classroom discussions. Yang and Liang, Watkins, Graves, and Hosp concluded that student output could greatly improve when teachers shift their questioning. Yang proposes that teachers ask less closed questions and opt for more open-ended questions that allow students to speak without a set structure. Liang, Watkins, Graves, and Hosp provided additional strategies that are more specific to text-based discussions. The authors of this study claim that it is important to engage in post-reading questioning before asking students to discuss a text. Kim’s study is geared towards teacher actions rather than the type of questioning. The author gives suggestions
for scaffolding teacher talk such as re-wording questions in multiple ways or creating specific procedures for classroom discussions.

These three studies provide several implications for my research. The first is that it is important to create discussion questions that are designed to promote high levels of interaction. For this reason, my study uses yes or no questions only as a means to reach open and referential questions. The number of closed or one-word answer questions that I use in my study is minimal. Additionally, the participants in the present study completed a story map before engaging in the discussion in order to check their comprehension of the story. Finally, in my study I carefully scripted my language as the facilitator so that each discussion was carefully organized and students had a thorough understanding of each question. In conclusion, the three studies in this section were essential in supporting the design of the classroom discussions for the purposes of this study.

Section Two: Research on Improving Discussion Skills for English Language Learners

Introduction

Section Two includes summaries of five recent studies that investigated the effects of various strategies aimed at improving the discussion skills of English Language Learners. The author of the first study in this section analyzed talk opportunities in a middle school classroom with a high population of English Language Learners (Cowgill, 2009). Cowgill’s research emphasized the need for discussion-based questioning rather than recitation questioning. This study supports the premise that English Language Learners need rich discussion opportunities in order to respond to text. The researcher in the next study in this section investigated scaffolding strategies that help English
Language Learners lower their affective filters in the reading classroom so that they feel more comfortable engaging in text-based discussions (Piper, 2009). The author of the third study studied the effects of teacher questioning techniques on student language ownership (Kim, 2010). This study suggested that by using a three-tiered scaffold, students would improve their oral language skills over the course of a school year. The author of the next study in section two analyzed the effectiveness of a different scaffold: activating prior knowledge (Navarro, 2010). Navarro asserted that English Language Learners would participate in higher-level text discussions if they use an anticipation guide to activate prior knowledge. The author of the final study in this section investigated the challenges that English Language Learners face when they participate in discussions with native speakers (Sevigny, 2012).

The first study presented in this section provides evidence that discussion-based questioning is more effective than recitation questioning. The summary that follows outlines the methodology, results, and conclusions of this study.

**Discussion-Based Questioning**

The study conducted by Cowgill (2009) analyzed the effects of various opportunities to talk about text provided in a middle school reading class with English Language Learners. The purpose was to investigate whether English Language Learners had significant opportunities to engage in high-level discourse surrounding a text. Cowgill grounded her research around three questions: (a) what kinds of talk opportunities around text do middle level English Language Learners receive in a reading classroom setting? (b) How do English Language Learners respond to these various opportunities? (c) How do English Language Learners explain and regard the talk
opportunities they receive and their participation in them? Cowgill proposed that English Language Learners need frequent opportunities to develop higher-level thinking and discourse skills; they need opportunities to talk about meaningful and relevant topics. The author hypothesized that these rich talk opportunities would come from discussion-based questioning rather than recitation questioning, or questioning that asks for one specific answer.

To complete the study, Cowgill sampled 32 seventh-grade English Language Learners of both Mexican and Russian descent. Over a six-week period, the author observed several reading classrooms, recording and transcribing all classroom discourse, coding the types of responses, and interviewing students to determine their comfort level with discussing a text.

Upon analyzing the qualitative data gathered in this study, Cowgill found that the majority of classroom discourse was centered on recitation rather than discussion-based questioning. Most questions were formulated so that they either guided students toward the correct answers or they only required basic one or two word answers. When a teacher posed a question that had the potential to lead to a higher-level discussion, the opportunity was almost always cut short. In these cases, teachers either took control of the discussion by answering it for the students or gave up on the question because students were unable to answer due to a lack of scaffolding. Upon interviewing students, Cowgill found that many students do not limit their academic discourse because “(a) They don’t understand the text, (b) they are scared and embarrassed, (c) the pace is too quick, (d) they are excluded by peers, and (e) the teacher is too controlling” (p. 121).
Cowgill concluded that the only way to develop academic discourse skills among English Language Learners is to provide frequent opportunities to engage in higher-level discussions. She also asserts that teachers must scaffold these discussion questions so that all students, regardless of their language proficiency levels, have access to the discussion. The next study in this section further emphasizes Navarro’s conclusion that a language learner’s comfort level greatly affects their ability to participate in classroom discussions.

**Affective Filters and English Language Learners**

The study conducted by Piper (2009) analyzed the effects of using centers in a reading classroom on English Language Learners’ affective filters. An affective filter refers to a language learner’s inhibitions towards using the second language. The higher a students’ affective filter is, the more inhibited they are towards speaking. When a student’s affective filter is lowered, they are more comfortable and confident in their ability to use the second language. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What are observable characteristics of the participants in terms of lowering their affective filters—their inhibitions—regarding the target language? (b) What are observable transactions between participants and texts (i.e. signs that may be interpreted as verbal symbols)? (c) What are observable interactions among participants? The researcher concluded that centers were an effective way to lower the affective filters of English Language Learners to promote text-based discussion.

To complete this study, Piper gathered ten junior high students with various levels of language proficiency in English. The students participated in structured centers where they completed poetry activities once a week for two hours for a period of six weeks. The centers were designed to create a safe space for the students so that they would feel
comfortable engaging in the material and discussing with their peers. The students participated in a variety of activities, including written responses, responding to artwork, and dramatizations. Each center had a separate space in the classroom, and the researcher recorded each group’s interactions using audio and video equipment. In addition to recordings of each center, the author collected data through anecdotal notes and observations, as well as participant interviews. Piper analyzed the data for each student and used that information to answer the research question. The study did not report any quantitative data.

Piper concluded that because students were not called on to speak in front of their peers, their affective filters were lower thus enabling them to speak English with more ease. Additionally, the fact that students were able to choose activities made them more comfortable engaging in the activities. An important conclusion of this study that is relevant to my research is that without scaffolding, English Language Learners will have difficulty lowering their affective filters. As a result of this study, the author proposes that teachers use activities, such as centers, when working with English Language Learners in order to make an environment in which the students feel comfortable using the second language. The summary that follows presents a specific strategy, other than centers, that helps lower an English Language Learner’s affective filter.

Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions

The study conducted by Kim (2010) investigated the connection between teacher questioning techniques and language ownership among English Language Learners. The research focused specifically on two elements: (a) the types of questions teachers asked and their functions and (b) changes in students’ participation and the use of English oral
language in classroom activities. According to Kim, “I use language ownership to mean ELLs’ volition to use emerging language skills to participate in class activities meaningfully and express their thoughts and ideas. Language ownership is manifested in ELLs’ classroom participation and English use” (p. 111). The author attempted to answer the following two research questions: (a) How do effective teachers scaffold their students’ learning through questions across a school year? and (b) How do effective teacher questions affect the development of student ownership in language learning?

To complete this study, Kim used data from three years of classroom observations. Kim followed two teachers of English Language Learners and documented their instructional practices as they related to scaffolding questions. The author targeted nine students of various backgrounds between fourth and sixth grade. The researcher then collected data from a variety of sources, including the Qualitative Reading Inventory, oral language assessments, teacher reflections, and transcriptions of audio recordings. Kim divided the teacher questions he encountered into three types: coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions. The author then coded the transcriptions and analyzed the effects of each question type.

Kim found that the most effective teachers used each type of question at different periods of the school year in order to scaffold group discussions and gradually release responsibility to the students over the course of one complete year. The teachers used coaching questions to set expectations for discussions in the first few months of school. In the middle half of the school year, teachers used facilitating questions to deepen students’ understanding. Finally, teachers used collaborating questions to help students become independent speakers of the English language and have discussions without
much teacher support. With these types of questions, ELL students showed significant gains on the QRI by the end of the year and all students improved their contributions to group discussions. Kim concluded that teachers of English Language Learners could support language development through strategic use of these three types of questions. The next study provides an additional strategy to use when scaffolding a text-based discussion with English Language Learners.

**Activating Prior Knowledge**

The study conducted by Navarro (2010), explored the effects of activating prior knowledge strategies on ESL students’ discussion skills. The purpose of this study was to explore why English Language Learners did not participate in guided reading oral discussions. After reviewing literature, the author discovered that ESL students might bring different learning experiences and backgrounds to class discussions than other students. These different experiences may differ from experiences represented in the books that they read; however, teachers should use these diverse experiences to help students participate rather than inhibit their participation. The author hypothesized that using anticipation guides would help these students contribute to class discussions in a meaningful way.

Navarro studied four third grade ESL students of various ethnic backgrounds. The author worked with these four students once a week for forty minutes in guided reading over the span of one month. To begin the study, the author surveyed the classroom teacher to collect data on the students’ participation in class and their reading skills. Navarro then collected baseline data by observing the students during guided reading and scoring their discussion skills on a group discussion checklist that measured the
participants’ motivation as well as their ability to ask questions, listen and respond to
group members, make logical references, and remain on topic. Over the next several
weeks, the students used an anticipation guide before engaging in the group discussion.
The anticipation guide was a set of questions designed to activate background
knowledge. At the end of the study, the students were scored again using the same group
discussion checklist.

The final data showed that all students significantly improved their discussion
skills. Each item on the discussion checklist was measured on a scale from one to four,
and most of their participants raised their score in each section by one point or more by
the end of the study. Navarro concluded that anticipation guides help ESL students build
confidence to state their opinions and talk about a story. As a result of this intervention,
ESL students were able to participate in high-level discussions.

The final study presented in this chapter connects the two main ideas in this
section: (a) English Language Learners will not participate in classroom discussions
unless they lower their affective filters and (b) specific strategies can be used to support
English Language Learners when they participate in classroom discussions. The next
researcher combines these ideas into one cohesive rubric that can be used to score
English Language Learners during discussions.

**Extreme Discussion Circles: The Harkness Method**

The study conducted by Sevigny (2012) investigated the effects of the Harkness
Method for text-based discussions on English Language Learners in a secondary English
as a Second Language classroom. The Harkness Method is defined as a pedagogical
structure in which an intensive discussion circle is the default format for classroom
interaction. “Simply put, it is a student led, text-based discussion in which students talk about what a text means to them, while the teacher observes from outside the circle” (p. 182). The method originated in a high school context, but has since been applied to English as a Second Language classrooms at varying grade levels.

Sevigny organized a cohort of English Language Learners who participated in daily Harkness Method Discussions in a high school and interviewed ESL students, asking them to share the challenges they faced when participating in text-based discussions with native English speakers. The student responses revealed that there are numerous reasons that English Language Learners have trouble participating in text-based discussions. These reasons include fears of inadequacy when using the second language and the inability to discuss texts at the same level as their native English-speaking peers. Many students explained that these reasons cause them to shut down easily during class discussions and participate less, even though they had prepared as much as their peers.

As a result of the study, the author developed a rubric to evaluate English Language Learners on their ability to discuss a text. The rubric is divided into six categories: Student Preparation, Non-verbal, Risk Taking, Conversational Techniques, Critical Thinking, and Text References. The author also developed recommended roles for students and teachers to use when employing the Harkness Method in an ESL class. While this study lacked depth, the author gave strong recommendations to help teachers improve classroom discussions with English Language Learners.
Synthesis of Section Two

The five articles summarized in Section Two are all investigations about various ways to improve discussion skills of English Language Learners. The studies by Cowgill (2009) and Piper (2009) articulated that the design of the discussion as well as the classroom culture and environment are important factors to consider when English Language Learners are engaging in an oral discussion. The studies by Kim (2010) and Navarro (2010) suggested two specific strategies that can be used to scaffold text-based discussions for English Language Learners: coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions and activating background knowledge using anticipation guides. Finally, the study by Sevigny (2012) provides a discussion rubric specifically targeted towards English Language Learners.

These studies offer the following conclusions: (a) English Language Learners will not participate in classroom discussions unless they lower their affective filters and feel comfortable talking among their peers, (b) specific strategies can be used as scaffolds to support English Language Learners when they engage in a text-based discussion, and (c) the oral language development of English Language Learners should be scored using indicators specifically geared towards the goals of language learners. Cowgill and Piper claimed that a student’s comfort level is an important factor to consider when asking English Language Learners to discuss a text; however, Kim and Navarro suggested that teachers can improve their students’ discussion skills if they employ various scaffolds such as coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions or activating prior knowledge using anticipation guides. Finally, Sevigny presented a different strategy to assist English
Language Learners by using the Harkness Rubric and giving students feedback using a rubric designed for English Language Learners.

The studies in Section Two provide several implications for my research. The first is that it is important to collect data surrounding the participants’ comfort level. For this reason, I included a student survey that each participant will complete three times throughout the study. The studies by Kim and Navarro provided the two strategies that I compared in this study. Finally, I used the Harkness rubric from the study by Sevigny in this study in order to measure the oral language development of the participants over a period of six weeks.

Section Three: Anxiety Towards Speaking a Second Language

Introduction

Section Three includes summaries of four recent studies that explored the factors that affect a student’s anxiety in the English as a Second Language classroom. The author of the first study in this section studied the effects of the pressures of speaking a foreign language (Wei, 2014). Wei’s research revealed that teachers have a strong connection to the pressures that students feel in the foreign language classroom. The researchers in the second study investigated the effects that language anxieties have on multiple intelligences and learner attitudes among young learners (Liu & Chen, 2013). This study suggested that teachers could lower a student’s anxiety through constant encouragement and positive feedback. The third study in this section explored the relationship with speaking anxiety in a foreign language with speaking test anxiety (Chan, Abdullah, & Yusof, 2012). This study also supported several teacher actions that could help students reduce anxiety when participating in an oral English test. The final study in this section
predicted the factors that influenced a student’s willingness to participate in a foreign language classroom (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). The researchers concluded that a student’s willingness to participate is influenced by the classroom environment.

The first study presented in this section gives several factors that influence a student’s anxiety in the foreign language classroom and the effects of those factors. The summary that follows outlines the methodology, results, and conclusions of this study.

**Classroom Anxiety and English Language Learners**

The study conducted by Wei (2014) analyzed the effects of the pressures of speaking a foreign language in an English as a foreign language classroom on English Language Learners from China. The researcher focused on foreign language students’ affective filters and the effects they had on the students’ confidence level in English class. According to Wei, a student’s affective filter is the factor that prevents him or her from producing output in a given language. This affective filter could be caused by many factors, including anxiety or a lack of confidence within the language. One research question guided this study: what are the factors that influence a student’s anxiety level in an English as a foreign language classroom?

To complete the study, Wei randomly chose twenty-five first and second year English students from various post-secondary institutions. The researcher conducted individual interviews with each participant in his or her native language of Chinese. Wei asked each participant ten questions and audio-recorded their responses. The questions emphasized comfort level with participating in the English class and were open-ended in nature. The researcher analyzed the responses of the participants in order to identify a list of key factors that affected anxiety.
Wei concluded that there were several factors that attributed to students’ anxiety levels in the English classroom. Many participants reported that they felt anxiety because they perceived themselves to be weak English speakers, which contributed to their lack of confidence. The majority of the participants reported that they felt more nervous and anxious in English class than in any other class. The researcher asserted that the students experience these anxieties naturally and that it is the role of the foreign language teacher to create a space that lessens each student’s anxiety. In conclusion, this study supports the notion that teachers are key players in supporting the confidence of English Language Learners. The next study further identifies several factors that affect language anxiety among English Language Learners.

**Foreign Language Anxiety in Young Learners**

The study conducted by Liu and Chen (2013) studies the effects that language anxieties have on multiple intelligences and learner attitudes among young learners. The author defined multiple intelligences as eight distinct intelligences that may develop throughout a lifetime. This is contradictory to the original view of intelligence that states that an individual may be intelligent or not. Four research questions guided this study: 1) to what extent is language anxiety experienced by English as a Foreign Language elementary school children? 2) Which of the three learning variables, multiple intelligences, learning attitude, or perceived English ability, has a stronger association with language anxiety? 3) Are language learning experience variables, such as years taking extracurricular English lessons outside of school and length of learning English, also significantly related to language anxiety, multiple intelligences and learning
attitudes? 4) Do students with various degrees of positive attitudes toward learning English have significantly different levels of language anxiety?

The study included 216 Taiwanese elementary school students across three classes of fifth graders and four classes of sixth graders. Each student was interviewed to assess his or her level of language anxiety and language attitude using a standardized scale that accesses foreign language classroom anxiety. The responses to individual questions were categorized in order to find the most common language anxieties among the students.

The researchers concluded that among the top anxieties for English learners were failing English class, feeling that other students have a better English speaking ability, feeling that other classmates have better English performance, being called on in English class, and not being prepared when the teacher asks questions. The authors state that the most important implication of this study for classroom teachers is that English as a Foreign Language students who have anxiety should receive constant encouragement and positive feedback from teachers, and teachers should create a safe learning environment for these students. The researchers of the next study outline the causes of anxiety specifically related to speaking skills and speaking tests in English.

**Anxiety in Relation to Speaking Skills**

The study conducted by Chan, Abdullah, and Yusof (2012) explored the anxiety that English learners from Malaysia experienced during English class. Three research questions guided this study: 1) what is the level of Malaysian ESL students’ anxiety towards speaking in English and taking a speaking test in English? 2) What is the relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking test anxiety? 3) What is the
difference between male and female students’ levels of anxiety towards speaking in English and taking a speaking test in English?

To complete the study, the researchers took a surveyed 700 undergraduate students enrolled in an English as a Second Language program in Malaysia. All of the students surveyed were preparing to take an oral communication test. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographic information, information on the students’ anxiety towards speaking English, and information on the students’ anxiety towards taking a speaking test in English. The data was analyzed and further categorized by gender.

The researchers found that the factors that had the greatest effect on the students’ anxiety were fear of peer competition, examiner incomprehensibility, and general nervousness. The authors concluded that there are several teacher actions that can support students as they work to overcome language anxiety: 1) provide more opportunities for students to speak to a native speaker in the classroom, 2) provide feedback upon observation of anxiety and work with students to strategically overcome them, and 3) simulate the testing environment so that students have a greater comfort level with the test. The final study in this section discusses the connections between learner motivation, classroom environment, and language anxiety.

**Willingness to Communicate in English**

The study conducted by Peng and Woodrow (2010) explored the factors that influenced an English learner’s willingness to communicate in English. Willingness to communicate, or WTC, is a measure that predicts a student’s willingness to orally communicate in a second language. Two research questions guided this study: 1) what
are the factors that affect an English learner’s willingness to communicate? 2) How can a student’s willingness to communicate be predicted? The goal of the researchers was to create and test an equation model that predicted a student’s willingness to communicate using a variety of factors.

To conduct the study, the researchers first hypothesized a model that they would use to predict a student’s willingness to communicate score. The model was then piloted using a random sample of 330 university students from eight different universities. The students were each given a questionnaire designed to give each student a score in five categories: communication anxiety, perceived communication competence, motivation to learn English, learner beliefs, and classroom environment. Each score was used in the equation model to give each participant a willingness to communicate score.

The researchers concluded that classroom environment strongly predicts a students’ willingness to communicate. Additionally, the classroom environment predicts other factors such as communication confidence, learner beliefs and motivation. The scale created by the researchers can also be used to test the willingness to communicate for other English Language Learners. The authors asserted that it is important to continue researching language anxiety in foreign language classrooms so that teachers can create a classroom environment that eliminates many of these anxiety factors.

**Synthesis of Section Three**

The four articles summarized in Section Three all investigate the factors that affect speaking anxiety among English Language Learners. The studies by Wei (2014) and Liu and Chen (2013) investigate the connection between classroom environment and learner anxiety. The studies by Peng and Woodrow (2010) and Chan, Abdullah, and
Yusof (2012) explore the connection between student anxiety and speaking output in language classrooms or on oral English tests.

These studies offer several implications for teachers: 1) teachers should create a classroom environment that minimizes student anxiety and maximizes student output, 2) teachers should support students by providing constant feedback and positive encouragement, and 3) teachers should simulate authentic experiences and give many options for practices.

The studies in Section Three provide many implications for my research. The first implication is that an English Language Learners’ performance in a text-based discussion may be affected by learner anxiety. This means that a student’s performance in a text-based discussion may not be truly representative of their linguistic competence. In order to gather the most accurate data, it is necessary for students to feel comfortable and supported. In this way, their anxiety will be minimized and their performance will be a more accurate representation of their skills.

**Conclusion**

In summary, Chapter Two presents a review of research relevant to the present study. The chapter focuses on three themes. The first theme, presented in Section One, is effective scaffolding techniques for oral language development. Section One includes three studies, all of which suggest that the careful design of post-reading questioning and teacher talk are important scaffolding techniques that promote text-based discussions as well as the comprehension of a text. The second theme, presented in Section Two, is research on improving discussion skills for English Language Learners. Section Two includes five studies that assert that specific strategies should be used when engaging in
text-based discussions with English Language Learners. These strategies range from creating a comfortable classroom environment to scaffolding questions and activating background knowledge. The final theme, presented in Section Three, includes four studies that investigate the various factors that affect a student’s anxiety level when learning a second language. Furthermore, these studies offer suggestions for classroom teachers to minimize student anxiety in the second language classroom.

This action research study examines the effects of two different teacher-questioning scaffolds (anticipation guides and coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions) on the oral language development of English Language Learners. These two strategies stem directly from the research of Navarro (2010) and Kim (2010). Additionally, I used the remaining studies presented in this chapter to design the discussion questions and student survey that I used to conduct research. It is my aim to add to this research base by proving the effectiveness of these strategies. The following chapter provides further details on the methodology I used to conduct this study.
CHAPTER THREE:

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter details the procedures used to provide teacher-led interventions and evaluate the growth in text-based discussion skills of the twelve participants in this study. This chapter has three sections. The first section provides a description of the twelve participants of the sample population, including demographic information and the academic criteria required for selection in the study. The section provides a description of the procedures. This section includes the procedures for the baseline discussion, as well as the procedures for the three groups: anticipation guides; coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions; and no intervention. The final section of Chapter Three provides a description of the data collection methods employed in this study, including survey data, self-assessment data, and discussion proficiency data. The following section provides a detailed description of the sample population.

Description of Sample Population

The participants of this study were chosen from a seventh grade bilingual reading class. The study included twelve students between the ages of twelve and thirteen. The mean age of the participants was 12.7 years, and the range age of the participants was one year. I selected the twelve participants from my reading class using the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress RIT scores. The NWEA Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP, test is a benchmark assessment that all seventh grade students take three times a year. This assessment provides a score called a RIT score, which tells a child’s academic level in Math and Reading. A student who reads on a seventh grade level would earn a RIT
score of 225. I used the students’ most recent test scores and eliminated all students from my reading class who scored below a 200 on the MAP assessment. I eliminated these students because they did not have a high enough reading level in English to comprehend the texts used in this study. All texts and discussions were held in English; therefore, selected participants had a LAU English proficiency level of at least three out of six. A LAU level of six signifies that the learner is fully a proficient, and a LAU level of one signifies that the learner has no proficiency in English. Students with a LAU level of three have basic conversation and reading skills in English; however, they may struggle with academic language. The twelve selected participants represent a random sampling of all students who scored higher than a 200 on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress assessment. The following section describes the procedures used in this study.

**Description of Procedures Used**

**Week 1**

The first step in the research process was to divide the twelve participants into three groups of four students. The participants were listed by RIT score from lowest to highest; then, each was assigned a number from one to twelve. To ensure that the groups were of mixed ability, every fourth participant was placed into a group. For example, group one included participants 1, 4, 7, and 10. A matrix of the groupings is provided in Appendix A.

During the first week, baseline data was gathered in order to determine the preliminary level of discussion proficiency for each participant. First, each participant completed a survey in English to gauge his or her comfort level with text-based discussions. A copy of the student survey is provided in Appendix B. Upon completion of
the survey, each group was instructed to review the ESL Harkness Rubric independently (Sevigny, 2012). Then, they were given example responses that represented each possible score on the rubric. The participants were allowed to ask questions and practiced scoring an example discussion. After reviewing the rubric, the participants silently read a two-paged passage written at a middle school grade level. The participants were told that they should annotate the text and refer to the discussion questions as they read. After reading, the participants were given approximately five minutes to plan for the discussion, but they were given no instruction regarding how to prepare. Following the five-minute planning period, the participants were directed to respond to four discussion questions in English in order, moving onto the next questions when the conversation stopped. The discussion questions are provided in Appendix C. The researcher created the discussion questions, and all questions were designed to encourage students to use text references. Furthermore, they were told to discuss with each other in English only and refrain from directing their comments towards the facilitator.

The discussion was recorded using an audio recorder and reviewed after the discussion in order to assign each participant a score. Each discussion was reviewed six times. During each review, I scored one category on the ESL Harkness Rubric for each participant. Upon reviewing the recorded evidence from the discussion, each participant was given a score from zero to four that most closely aligned with the criteria in each category on the rubric.

During the discussion, I scored each participant’s nonverbal behavior. According to the ESL Harkness Rubric, nonverbal behavior includes posture, eye contact, actively searching the text, using gestures, and taking notes. During the discussion, I took
anecdotal notes to describe each participant’s behavior. I assigned a score to each
participant using the descriptors that most closely matched the participants’ observed
behaviors. To end the discussion, each student was instructed to score him or herself
using the ESL Harkness Rubric.

**Weeks 2-6**

Prior to the second week, an intervention was randomly assigned to each group.
The first group’s intervention was an anticipation guide, or a pre-discussion activity
designed to activate the students’ background knowledge. The second group’s
intervention was coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions. In other words, this
group received strategic, planned coaching throughout each discussion. The third group
was treated as a control group and received no intervention. All groups participated in a
weekly group discussion for the following five-week period. I recorded the group
discussions and collected data on weeks three and six. The data collected included a score
for each category on the ESL Harkness Rubric, the participants’ self-evaluation, an audio
recording of the discussion, and a student survey. Additionally, all participants completed
the survey from week one on weeks three and six to monitor their progress.

Each week, the participants from all three groups participated in a group
discussion. Each week, the students began by reviewing the rubric and setting a goal for
themselves based on their self-assessment from the previous week. The students were
instructed to choose one area from the rubric that they would like to improve. Prior to
reading the passage, the students were given one minute to review four discussion
questions. These discussion questions were provided on a separate sheet before reviewing
the text, but the participants were allowed to refer back to the questions throughout the
discussion. The students were then asked to read the passage. Each week, the participants were reminded that they should annotate, underline, or highlight any important information and return to the questions whenever necessary. The students were given additional time after reading to plan for the discussion and review the questions. Next, the participants were instructed to engage in a group discussion to answer each of the four questions. Following the discussion, the participants were prompted to return to the rubric, score themselves, and reflect on their goals. The procedures for each group are outlined in the next section.

**Group 1: Anticipation guide.**

The first group, comprised of four participants, was randomly selected to receive an anticipation guide as their weekly intervention. Prior to the discussion, students were given an anticipation guide created by the researcher. This anticipation guide was comprised of six statements related to the passage. An example of an anticipation guide is provided in Appendix D. The participants were asked to mark independently whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement before reading the passage. When students had completed the anticipation guide, they were given one minute to read the four discussion questions. After reading and planning for the discussion, the participants returned to the anticipation guide and reviewed the statements again. For each of the six statements, the participants independently marked whether or not they agreed. As a group, the participants and the facilitator reviewed the answers and the participants were prompted to justify briefly their opinions using evidence from the text. After discussing the anticipation guide, the participants were instructed to begin a group discussion using
the weekly discussion questions without support from the facilitator. Each week they were reminded to discuss with each other and refrain from talking to the facilitator.

**Group 2: Coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions.**

The second group, comprised of four participants, was randomly selected to receive coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as their weekly intervention. Before beginning the discussion, the participants were given feedback, or coaching, on their planning skills. Then students began the discussion using the weekly discussion questions. In this group, the facilitator played an active role by using specific questions to help students elaborate or expand upon their responses. For example, participants were asked to provide specific textual evidence to support an answer, student responses were re-worded, background knowledge was provided where necessary, specific students were prompted to add their opinions.

**Group 3: No intervention.**

The third group, comprised of four participants, was randomly selected to receive no intervention. The participants received time to review the questions and set a personal goal each week; however, they received no extra support from the facilitator before, during, and after the discussion. Each week they were reminded to discuss with each other and refrain from talking to the facilitator. The following section details the data collection methods used in his study.

**Description of Data Collection**

In this six-week study, data was collected on weeks one, three, and six. Data from week one is baseline data and reflects the skills of the participants without any intervention. Data from week three reflects the growth in the first two weeks of the
intervention, and data from week six reflects the final growth of each participant after using a given intervention. There were three sets of data gathered throughout this study: survey data, self-assessment data, and discussion proficiency data.

The first set of data gathered throughout this study was survey data. Every participant completed a survey in which they answered questions about their comfort level with text-based discussions. The survey was comprised of six questions that corresponded with the six sections on the ESL Harkness Rubric (Sevigny, 2012). Each survey question was written in a multiple-choice format and gave five options, ranked in order from a low to a high level of confidence. Each choice was assigned a points value and the participants earned a score out of a maximum score of twenty-four points. A matrix of the point values is provided below in Table 3.1. Following the study, the total growth throughout the six-week period was calculated.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choice</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second set of data gathered throughout this study was self-assessment data. Each week, the participants scored themselves using each of the six categories on the ESL Harkness Rubric. The scores for each of the categories on the rubric were scored in the first, third, and sixth week and their growth over the duration of the study was summarized.
The final set of data gathered throughout this study was discussion proficiency data. The ESL Harkness Rubric is divided into six categories: planning for discussion, risk-taking, conversational techniques, non-verbal behavior, critical thinking, and the quality of text references. Each of these categories has five levels of proficiency, labeled from zero to four. In addition, the rubric measures the quantity of turns taken and the quantity of text references. Therefore, in total, the ESL Harkness Rubric provides eight separate measures. A copy of the rubric is provided in Appendix E. During each week of data collection, the discussions were audio recorded and scored following the discussion. The fourth category, non-verbal behavior, was scored during the discussion as it relied heavily on observational data. Each category on the rubric was scored individually and the total growth was measured separately rather than assigning a composite score for the entire group discussion. The participants’ scores for each category were recorded. Following the sixth week, I calculated each participant’s total growth in each of the eight categories. The following section provides a summary of this chapter.

Summary

This chapter described in detail the procedures used in this study. In the first section, a description of the sample population was provided. In the second section, a description of the procedures of the study was provided. Finally, in the third section, a description of the data collection procedures was described, including survey data, self-assessment data, and discussion proficiency data. The next chapter summarizes the results of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the results of the six-week study analyzing the effects of

chapter is divided into two sections. Section One summarizes several measures used to

analyze the quality of the text-based discussion. Section Two summarizes the measures

used to analyze the level of student confidence throughout the discussions.

The data provided in Section One analyzes the quality of the text-based
discussions. Section one is further divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section

compares data from each of the three groups using the ESL Harkness rubric (Sevigny,

2012). This rubric, used to analyze the quality of the discussions, is further divided into

sub-categories, all of which are summarized in this sub-section. The sub-categories are

Planning for Discussion, Risk-Taking, Conversational Techniques, Non-verbal Behavior,

Critical Thinking, and Text References. The second sub-section summarizes the number

of text references made by each participant, and the third sub-section summarizes the

number of turns taken by each participant throughout the study.

The data provided in Section Two analyzes confidence level of the participants

throughout the text-based discussions. This section analyzes the results from the student

surveys administered in weeks one, three, and six. The section that follows, Section One,

summarizes and analyzes the quality of text-based discussions throughout the six-week

study.
Section One: Text-Based Discussion Quality

This section summarizes the results of the data collected to measure the quality of the text-based discussions throughout the study. Six measurements were gathered using the ESL Harkness rubric: Planning for Discussion, Risk-Taking, Conversational Techniques, Non-verbal Behavior, Critical Thinking, and the quality of text references (Sevigny, 2012).

Planning for Discussion

The first skill that was scored using the ESL Harkness rubric is Planning for Discussion. According to the rubric, a score of zero indicates that the participant of the discussion did not complete the reading and/or did not bring the required materials to the discussion. A score of one indicates that the participant brought the materials but appears disorganized and unprepared. A score of two indicates that the participant has minimally prepared by completing the reading and bringing the materials to the discussion. A score of three indicates that the participant looked up key words, asks questions, and took notes in addition to completing the reading. The highest score is a score of four which indicates that the participant was well prepared by completing the reading, taking notes, asking challenging questions, and researching key background information (Sevigny, 2012).

Table 4.1 lists the scores for each participant in the category of Planning for Discussion during the first, third, and sixth week of the study. The last column displays the total growth for each participant between week one and week six. All participants scored at least a two or a three during the first week, indicating some level of preparation, but no participant reached the highest score of a four by the end of the study. According to the table, only two participants experienced growth in this category. Both participants
were members of Group Two, or the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions.

Table 4.1

Planning For Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1 displays the average scores for each group in the first, third, and sixth week. Additionally, the graph shows the average total growth for each group. During week one, the Anticipation Guide Intervention Group scored 2 points. This score remained consistent during week three and week six, indicating that students made no gains. The Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions Group earned 2.25 points in week one. In week three, this group grew 0.5 points to score 2.75 points. The group made no additional gains between week three and week six; therefore, the group’s average total growth throughout the six-week study was 0.5 points. The third group, or the group that received no intervention, also scored 2.25 points in week one. In week three, the group increased its score by 0.5 points to earn 2.75 points; however, in week
six, the group only scored 2.25 points. For this reason, the No Intervention Group did not show any gains between week one and week six.

While each group has a different starting average score in week one, only one group, group two, earned an average growth score higher than zero. This group, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention, grew an average of 0.5 points during the six-week period and was the only group to show growth. The group that received no intervention performed higher than the Anticipation Guide group; however, neither group showed growth at the end of six weeks. The next section summarizes the results of the risk-taking category on the ESL Harkness rubric.

![Figure 4.1 Planning for Discussion Average Scores](image)

**Risk-Taking**

The second section that was scored using the ESL Harkness rubric is Risk-Taking. According to the rubric, a score of zero indicates that the student did not participate in the group discussion. A score of one indicates that the student participated non-verbally through eye contact and gestures, but the student did not talk during the
discussion. A score of two indicates that the participant occasionally made comments or
asked questions, but needed help making his or her ideas understood. A score of three
indicates that the participant spoke often, but could have shared more openly and asked
more challenging questions. Finally, a score of four indicates that the participant shared
all of his or her ideas, and asked challenging and deep questions, even if responses were
rough (Sevigny, 2012).

Table 4.2 lists the scores for each participant during the first, third, and sixth week
in the category of Risk-Taking. The last column lists the total growth for each participant
between weeks one and six. As the table outlines, one participant experienced growth in
the first group related to Anticipation Guides, two participants experienced growth in the
second group related to Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions, and one
participant experienced growth in the third group related to no intervention. The second
group, or the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions, had
the highest number of participants that experienced growth in the risk-taking category.
Table 4.2

Risk-Taking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2 shows the average scores for each group in the first, third, and sixth week in the Risk-Taking category. The graph also shows the average total growth between the first and the sixth week for each group. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 2.25 points. In week three, the group did not see any growth. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 0.25 points, earning a final score of 2.5 points. The average total growth for Group One was 0.25 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 2.5 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 3 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 3.25 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 0.75 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 2 points during week one. The group grew 0.25 points in week three, earning a score of 2.25 points. In week six, Group Three’s average scores remained
constant at 2.25 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 0.25 points.

Each group demonstrated an average growth greater than zero; however the second group, or the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions demonstrated the highest average growth by growing an average of 0.75 points during the six-week period. The other two groups each grew an average of 0.25 points. The growth in these scores indicated that these students improved in their ability to take risks and jump into discussions, interrupting when necessary. The next section summarizes the results of the conversational techniques category on the ESL Harkness rubric.

![Figure 4.2 Risk-Taking Average Scores](image)

**Conversational Techniques**

The next category on the ESL Harkness rubric measures the participants’ conversational techniques. A score of zero in this category indicates that the participant did not speak during the discussion. A score of one indicates that the participant could
open a new topic or ask a question to the group, but had difficulty interrupting or jumping into the conversation. A score of two indicates that the participant could also answer simple questions or concrete questions if he or she was asked directly. The participant may also try to interrupt, but may have trouble doing so. A score of three indicates that the student actively participated by using confirmation checks or asking clarifying questions. The participant used the names of the group members, connected comments to previous comments, but did not add new ideas to the discussions. Finally, a score of four indicates that the participant addressed group participants by name and directed questions to individuals. The participant also connected previous ideas while adding new ideas to the discussion (Sevigny, 2012).

Table 4.3 shows the scores for each participant’s conversational techniques in the first, third, and sixth week. The final column in the table displays the total growth for each participant between weeks one and six. Overall, five of twelve participants grew throughout the duration of the study. Two participants from group one experienced growth, two participants from group two experienced growth, and one participant from group three experienced growth. In other words, the same number of participants experienced growth in the group that received anticipation guides and the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions.
Table 4.3

*Conversational Techniques*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3 displays the average scores for each group in the Conversational Techniques category during weeks one, three, and six. Additionally, the graph shows the average total growth for each group throughout the duration of the study. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 1.5 points. In week three, the group dropped, earning only 1.25 points. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew by 0.75 points, earning a final score of 2 points. The average total growth for Group One was 0.5 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 2 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 2.75 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 2.75 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 0.75 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 1.25 points during week one. The group grew 0.75 points in week three, earning a score of 2 points. In week six, Group
Three’s average scores dropped to 1.75 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 0.5 points.

The group that received anticipation guides and the group that received no intervention both had an average growth of 0.5 points. The group that earned the highest average growth was the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions, earning a score of 0.75 points. This data is evidence that the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention improved the most in their ability to carry on a conversation by introducing new topics or questions and addressing specific members of the group. The next section summarizes the results of the non-verbal behavior category on the ESL Harkness rubric.

### Non-verbal Behavior

The next category on the ESL Harkness rubric measures the participants’ non-verbal behavior. A score of zero in this category indicates that the participant arrived late, fell asleep, or had poor eye contact or posture. A score of one indicates that the participants seemed to actively search for information or take notes, but made no eye
contact with the group members. A score of two indicates that the participant arrived on
time and may have been tired, but attempted to follow along, take notes, and make eye
contact with the other group members. A score of three indicates that the participant
engaged with the group, but could have improved his or her level of engagement. Finally,
a score of four indicates that the participant actively found text references and took notes
while using gestures, making eye contact with the other members of the group, sitting up
straight, and using facial expressions (Sevigny, 2012).

Table 4.4 lists the scores for each participant in this category during week one,
week three, and week six. The final column lists the total growth for each participant
between the first and the sixth week. In each group, two participants experienced growth,
and two participants did not experience growth. The participant that achieved the most
group was participant one, a member of the group that received anticipation guides as an
intervention.

Table 4.4

Non-verbal Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.4 shows the average scores for non-verbal behavior for each group. The graph also shows the average growth for each group during the six-week period. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 2 points. In week three, the group did not see any growth. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 1 point, earning a final score of 3 points. The average total growth for Group One was 1 point. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 2.75 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 3 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 3.25 points. In total, Group Two steadily grew an average of 0.5 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 2.25 points during week one. The group grew 0.25 points in week three, earning a score of 2.5 points. In week six, Group Three’s average scores grew to 2.75 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 0.5 points.

Each of the three groups earned an average growth score of at least 0.5. The group that achieved the highest average growth was group one, or the group that received anticipation guides. This group earned a score of 1.0 for average total growth, a score twice that of the average growth of the other two groups. This data suggests that the group that received anticipation guides improved the most in their ability to use appropriate non-verbal cues during a group conversation. The next section summarizes the results of the critical thinking category on the ESL Harkness rubric.
Critical Thinking

The next category on the ESL Harkness rubric measures the participants’ critical thinking skills. A score of a zero in this category indicates that there is no evidence of critical thinking because the participant did not speak during the discussion. A score of one indicates that the participant made limited comments with unclear connections between ideas. A score of two indicates that the participant made limited connections between ideas, but the ideas are not original. A score of three indicates that the participant attempted to connect ideas and develop new ideas, but did not clearly explain how text references support his or her ideas. Finally, a score of four indicates that the participant made strong connections to new ideas while using text references that clearly support his or her ideas (Sevigny, 2012).

Table 4.5 lists the scores for each participant’s critical thinking skill during weeks one, three, and six. The table also shows the total growth for each participant between week one and week six. Three participants in group one experienced growth, three participants in group two experienced growth, and one participant in group three
experienced growth. Additionally, one participant in group three experienced negative growth. While participants in group one and group two had different starting points in week one, both groups experienced the same amount of growth in critical thinking throughout the study.

Table 4.5

**Critical Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5 displays the average critical thinking scores for each group in the first, third, and sixth week of the study. The graph also displays the average total growth for each group. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 1.5 points. In week three, the group did not see any growth. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 0.75 points, earning a final score of 2.25 points. The average total growth for Group One was 0.75 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 2.25 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 2.5 points, and in the sixth week the group earned
an average of 3 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 0.75 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 1.25 points during week one. The group grew 0.25 points in week three, earning a score of 1.5 points. In week six, Group Three’s average scores dropped back to 1.25 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 0 points.

The group that received no intervention did not experience any growth throughout the study. Each of the groups that received an intervention experienced the same amount of growth, earning a score of 0.75 points. Both of the groups that received an intervention improved in their ability to display a high level of critical thinking throughout the discussion. The next section summarizes the results of the text references category on the ESL Harkness rubric.

![Figure 4.5 Critical Thinking Average Scores](image)

**Text References (Quality)**

The final category on the ESL Harkness rubric measures the quality of the participants’ text references. A score of zero in this category indicates that the participant appeared to be lost in the text and failed to highlight the text or make any markings in the
text. A score of one indicates that the participant rarely cited the text and had trouble identifying the page number when making a text reference. A score of two indicates that the participant found text references made by other group members but did not make any original text references. A score of three indicates that the participant regularly cited text, including the page number; however, the participant had trouble paraphrasing or summarizing the text references. Finally, a score of four indicates that the participant consistently supported his or her ideas using textual evidence. The text references were always accompanied by the exact page number and directly related to the conversation (Sevigny, 2012).

Table 4.6 lists the scores for each of the participants in this category during week one, week three, and week six. The last column displays the total growth of each participant at the end of the study. Five of the twelve participants achieved growth during the six weeks. Two participants from group one experienced growth, three participants from group two experienced growth, and no participants from group three experienced growth. The highest level of growth was achieved in group two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions. Within this group, one participant grew three points, the highest growth of any participant in this category.
Table 4.6

Text References (Quality)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.6 displays the average scores of the quality of text references for each group in weeks one, three, and six. Additionally, the graph shows the average total growth for each group. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 0 points. In week three, the group did not see any growth. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 0.5 points, earning a final score of 0.5 points. The average total growth for Group One was 0.5 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 1.75 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 3.25 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 3 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 1.25 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 1 point during week one. The group grew 0.25 points in week three, earning a score of 1.25 points. In week
six, Group Three’s average scores dropped to 1 point; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 0 points.

The only group that experienced an average growth score of 0 was the group that received no intervention. The group that received anticipation guides as an intervention grew an average of 0.5 points throughout the study, and the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention grew 1.25 points throughout the study. According to the data, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions improved the most in their ability to reference the text and to provide relevant connections between the text and the discussion questions. The next section summarizes the results of the overall growth of the participants using the ESL Harkness rubric.

![Figure 4.6 Text References (Quality) Average Scores](image)

**ESL Harkness Rubric: Total Performance Score Comparisons**

In summary, the ESL Harkness rubric measures six areas: Planning for Discussion, Risk-Taking, Conversational Techniques, Non-verbal Behavior, Critical Thinking, and Text References. In four of the six categories, group two, the group that
received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions experienced the highest growth. The group that received anticipation guides received the highest level of growth in only one category. The group that received no intervention grew the least overall.

Table 4.7 is a summary of all six categories. The scores in each category were added together, giving each participant a total score. Table 4.7 shows each participant’s total score during week one, week three, and week six. The final column shows each participant’s total growth throughout the six-week period. Only two participants did not show any growth throughout the study. It is important to note that these participants had scores that are higher than most of the participants’ scores.

Table 4.7

*ESL Harkness Rubric Total Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7 shows the average total scores for each group in weeks one, three, and six. The graph also shows the average total growth for each group. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 9.25 points. In week three, the group
scored 9 points. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 3.25 points, earning a final score of 12.25 points. The average total growth for Group One was 3 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 13.5 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 17.25 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 18 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 4.5 points throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 10 points during week one. The group grew 2.25 points in week three, earning a score of 12.25 points. In week six, Group Three’s average scores dropped to 11.25 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 1.25 points.

According to the Figure 4.7, each group experienced growth throughout the study. The group that received no intervention achieved the lowest average total growth and the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved the highest average total growth. In other words, group two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions grew the most overall when all areas of the ESL Harkness Rubric are considered. The next section summarizes the quantity of text references made by the participants.
Text References (Quantity)

During weeks one, three, and six, the quantity of each text reference was tallied. The results are displayed in Table 4.8. The last column shows the total growth of each participant. Six of the twelve participants experienced growth in the quantity of text references made throughout the study. Most of the participants were inconsistent with the number of text references made throughout the study. Two participants in group one experienced growth, three participants in group two experienced growth, and one participant in group three experienced growth throughout the study. The greatest amount of growth achieved by any participant was in group two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions.
Table 4.8

*Text References (Quantity)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8 shows the average number of text references made by each group in weeks one, three, and six. The graph also shows the average total growth achieved by each group. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 0 points. In week three, the group did not see any growth. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 0.5 points, earning a final score of 0.5 points. The average total growth for Group One was 0.5 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 0.5 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 2 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 1.75 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 1.25 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 0.75 points during week one. The group grew 1.5 points in week three, earning a score of 2.25 points. In
week six, Group Three’s average scores dropped to 1 point; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 0.25 points.

All of the groups achieved growth throughout the six weeks in this category; however, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention greatly surpassed the other two groups to achieve the highest level of growth in the quantity of text references made throughout the discussion. The following section summarizes the quantity of turns taken by the participants in the study.

**Figure 4.8 Text References (Quantity) Average Scores**

![Bar chart showing average text references made by participants across weeks and groups.]

**Turns Taken**

Throughout the first, third, and sixth week of the study, the number of turns taken by each participant was tallied. The results for each participant are summarized in Table 4.9. In addition, the table shows the total growth for each participant at the end of the study. Six of the twelve participants improved the quantity of turns taken throughout the study. Two participants from growth one experienced growth, three participants from group two experienced growth and one participant from group three experienced growth.
In other words, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions had the highest number of participants who experienced growth in this category.

Table 4.9

**Turns Taken**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.9 shows the average number of turns taken by each group in weeks one, three, and six of the study. Additionally, the graph shows the average total growth for each group in this category. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 4 points. In week three, the group scored 2 points. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 2.25 points, earning a final score of 4.25 points. The average total growth for Group One was 0.25 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 3.25 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 5 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 5.5 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 2.25 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 4 points during
week one. The group grew 0.5 points in week three, earning a score of 4.5 points. In week six, Group Three’s average scores dropped to 3 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was -1 point.

The group that received no intervention achieved a negative average growth score. The groups that received interventions both experienced growth; however, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved the highest level of growth in this area, signifying that this group improved the most in the amount of turns taken by group members throughout the discussion. The next section analyzes the results of the data collected to measure student perception and confidence.

![Figure 4.9 Turns Taken Average Scores](image)

**Section Two: Student Confidence and Perception**

This section summarizes the results of the data collected to measure student confidence and perception throughout the study. One measurement was gathered for this section in the form of student survey data. The next section summarizes the student survey data. The next section summarizes the data collected through student surveys.
Student Surveys

During the first, third, and sixth week of the study, each participant completed a student survey to measure their confidence level with completing text-based discussions. See Appendix B for the Student Surveys. Each answer choice of the survey corresponded with a score from one to five. Upon completion of the survey, the points were added and each participant earned a score out of thirty. The scores for each participant during week one, three, and six are displayed in Table 4.10. The final column shows the total growth for each participant throughout the duration of the study. Ten out of twelve participants achieved growth in this category. The participants that achieved the highest level of growth were members of group two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention.

Table 4.10

Student Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
<th>Week 1 Score</th>
<th>Week 3 Score</th>
<th>Week 6 Score</th>
<th>Total Performance Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.10 shows the average scores for the student survey in each of the three groups during weeks one, three, and six of the study. The graph also shows the average total growth for each group. During the first week, the group that received anticipation guides scored 10.5 points. In week three, the group scored 12.25 points. At the end of the study, in week six, the group grew 0.25 points, earning a final score of 12.5 points. The average total growth for Group One was 2 points. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions earned a score of 10.25 in week one. In the third week, the group earned an average of 13.25 points, and in the sixth week the group earned an average of 15.5 points. In total, Group Two grew an average of 5.25 throughout the course of the study. The group that received no intervention earned 12.25 points during week one. The group grew 1.25 points in week three, earning a score of 13.5 points. In week six, Group Three’s average scores remained constant at 13.5 points; therefore, the total average growth for Group Three was 1.25 points.

All groups achieved growth in student confidence levels. The group that received no intervention grew the least with only one point of growth overall; the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved the highest level of growth with a score of five points of growth overall. The final section of this chapter summarizes all of the results of the study.
Conclusion

In summary, the participants in this study achieved various levels of growth in both the quality of text-based discussions, as well as in level of confidence throughout the group discussions. Section One of this chapter outlined each group’s growth in text-based discussion quality using the measures on the ESL Harkness rubric (Sevigny, 2012). The six main categories were Planning for Discussion, Risk-Taking, Conversational Techniques, Non-verbal Behavior, Critical Thinking, and Text References. In addition, Section One included data summarizing the quantity of text references and the quantity of turns taken throughout the study. Group Two, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved growth in each of the categories and clearly demonstrated the most growth overall in the quality of text-based discussions.

Section Two of this chapter summarized the data provided by the student surveys. This section measured the student confidence and perception levels throughout the duration of the study. The results from section two mirrored the results from Section One.
While many students demonstrated growth in this area, Group Two greatly surpassed Groups One and Three for average total growth.

The next chapter further analyzes the results of this study and offers major implications and explanations of the results.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter draws conclusions from the results of a six-week study analyzing the effects of teacher questioning interventions on student performance on text-based discussions. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section One offers an in-depth explanation of the results. Section Two discusses the strengths and limitations of the study, and Section Three offers recommendations for future research, and Section Four provides ideas for practical classroom application.

The explanation of the results in Section One is divided into two sections: Text-Based Discussion Quality and Student Confidence. The first sub-section, Text-Based Discussion Quality, draws several conclusions from the data provided by ESL Harkness rubric (Sevigny, 2012). The second sub-section, Student Confidence, draws conclusions from the student survey data. Section Two is divided into two sections. The first section discusses three major strengths of this study involving the design of the study and subsequent results. Section Three offers several recommendations for future research as well as suggestions for classroom teachers. Finally, Section Four suggests ways that findings from this study can be applied to the classroom by providing recommendations to the classroom teacher.

Section One: Explanation of Results

In this section, the results of the study are explained, including connections to previous research. This section is divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section draws conclusions from the results of the ESL Harkness rubric measures of text-based
discussion quality. The second sub-section draws conclusions from the results of the student surveys designed to measure student confidence.

**Text-Based Discussion Quality**

The ESL Harkness rubric measures a student’s ability to engage in text-based discussions in English. The rubric is divided into six categories: Planning for Discussion, Risk-Taking, Conversational Techniques, Non-verbal Behavior, Critical Thinking and Text References. Throughout the study, the participants were given a score between zero and four in each category during weeks one, three, and six. Additionally, the participants were given a total performance score that represented the sum of the scores in each of the categories. The maximum total performance score for each participant is twenty-four points (Sevigny, 2012).

In four of the six categories, the intervention group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions experienced the greatest growth throughout the six week period. These four categories were Planning for Discussion, Risk-Taking, Conversational Techniques, and Text References. The intervention group that received anticipation guides experienced the most growth in one category: Non-verbal behavior. Finally, the two intervention groups experienced equal growth in the critical thinking category. The group that received no intervention did not demonstrate the greatest growth in any category. When the categories were combined into a total performance score, the intervention group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved the highest level of growth, superseding the other anticipation guides group by 1.5 points and the group that received no intervention by 3.25 points. Two additional measures were taken in order to determine the quality of each text-based discussion: The
quantity of turns taken by each participant and the quantity of text references made by each participant throughout the discussions. In each of those categories, the intervention group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved significantly more growth as compared to the other two groups. In summary, the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions achieved the highest level of growth overall, significantly surpassing the growth scores of the other two groups in all but two categories.

There are several studies that support the conclusion that the use of coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions was the most effective intervention in this study. Cowgill (2009) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of various discussion opportunities in a middle school English Language Learner classroom. The researcher concluded that teachers who used scaffolded text-based discussion questions saw the most participation among English Language Learners. Coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions are one such way of scaffolding text-based discussions. The results of this study align with Cowgill’s conclusions that teacher-guided discussions lead students to a higher level of participation. This is evidenced in the participants’ growth in the quantity of turns taken and the quantity of text references made. In other words, the two studies demonstrate that guided questioning directly relates to student output.

The results of this study are also closely aligned with those of the study by Kim (2010). This study analyzed the effectiveness of teacher scaffolding strategies for English Language Learners throughout the course of a school year. It was in this study that Kim first described the notion of coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions. Kim concluded that these questions were an effective way to teach English Language Learners
to become proficient participants of text-based discussions. The present study was an extension of Kim’s research in that it tested Kim’s theories against another intervention. The results of this study validate Kim’s assertion that coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions are an effective form of intervention for English Language Learners.

After consideration of previous research, it may be concluded that coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions when used as an intervention are more effective than anticipation guides. As the research suggests, coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions aim to support the language learners by providing the teacher guidance and coaching necessary to reach the higher level questions. This is accomplished through strategic scaffolding to support students’ acquisition of background knowledge. Anticipation guides are a form of intervention that only takes place before the discussion begins. Anticipation guides greatly aid the students in activating their prior knowledge in order to better comprehend the text. The pitfall of anticipation guides is that they are not designed to scaffold questions within the discussion itself. While offering heavy support before the discussion, this form of intervention offered little support during the discussion. As evidenced by the results of this study and those of previous studies, English Language Learners need scaffolded support throughout the discussion itself so that students may reach a high level of discussion on each individual question.

**Student Confidence**

Throughout the study, a student survey was used in order to determine each participant’s level of confidence and perception of his or her skills during text-based
discussions. The student surveys, administered during the first, third, and sixth week, were scored with a possible maximum score of twenty-four points. See Appendix B for the student surveys.

The intervention group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions received the lowest score during the first week, indicating that at the beginning of the study, the participants felt less confident and prepared as compared to participants in other groups. By week six, this group scored significantly higher than the other two groups, demonstrating an average total growth score of 5.25 points. The growth that the coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions group achieved was 3.25 points higher than the growth of the anticipation guides intervention group and 4 points higher than the growth of the group that received no intervention. In summary, the most effective intervention from this study, in regards to student confidence throughout a text-based discussion, is coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions.

There are several studies that support these results. The first of these studies is the study conducted by Kim (2008). In this study, the researcher studied the various ways in which teachers scaffolded their talk when working with English Language Learners and the effects of these scaffolds. Kim concluded that scaffolded teacher talk creates a safe space in which every student feels comfortable to take risks and speak in English. In this study, participants in the group that received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions, or scaffolded teacher talk, showed greater confidence than the other two groups. Additionally, this group showed the greatest growth in student survey scores at the end of six weeks.
Upon consideration of the previous research studies, it may be concluded that student confidence is an important consideration when asked to participate in text-based discussions. The group that grew the most on the student survey also saw the most growth in discussion skills. It is likely that with the help of teacher scaffolding, such as coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions supported the students so that they felt ready to take risks throughout the discussion. While the group that received anticipation guides received support before the discussion, the participants in this group were left to discuss without any reliance on the teacher, making it more difficult to take linguistic risks. It is necessary to conclude, therefore, that students must develop in confidence alongside their development of discussion skills. Coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions are a form of intervention that effectively supports students in both categories.

Section Two: Strengths and Limitations

In this section the major strengths and limitations of this study are discussed. There are three major strengths discussed: 1) the ability to test a control group; 2) the use of the teacher as the researcher; and 3) the study yielded similar results that were supported by research in the areas of text-based discussions and student confidence. Additionally, there are three major limitations discussed: 1) the short duration of the study; 2) the sample size of participants of the study; and 3) it was difficult to determine whether students had comprehended the text.

Strengths

There were three major strengths that became apparent upon analyzing the results of this study. The first strength was the ability to test a control group, the second strength was the use of the teacher as the researcher, and the third strength was that the study
yielded similar results that were supported by research in the areas of text-based discussions and student confidence.

To complete this study, the participants were divided into three groups: two groups received an intervention and one group was treated as a control group. The group designated as the control group received no intervention; however, the group participated in the text-based discussions in a similar manner to that of the other two groups. Upon analyzing the results, it became clear that the control group achieved very little growth and did not grow more than the two intervention groups in a single category.

In many studies involving human subjects, it is difficult to include a control group; however, because students in the reading classroom from which the participants were chosen often participate in text-based discussions without an intervention, the participants in the control group followed their normal classroom routine. Without the use of this control group, it would have been impossible to conclude that the interventions had an effect on the growth of the participants. Comparing the results of the intervention groups to the results of the control group proved that the interventions had a true effect on the growth of the participants. In other words, the results of the control group demonstrated that without an intervention, the students would have demonstrated minimal growth. Overall, this use of a control group validated the results of the study.

A second strength of this study is the use of the teacher as the researcher. All of the participants of the study had interacted with the researcher and participated in text-based discussions for the greater part of one school year. Because the participants were accustomed to the personal style of the discussion facilitator, the conversations were more authentic and more accurately matched the students’ abilities. This was especially
important because of the emphasis placed on student confidence throughout the study. If the participants had worked with an unknown facilitator and researcher, it is likely that they would have had lower confidence, causing them to perform below their abilities. This, in turn, caused the data both from the ESL Harkness rubric and the student surveys to be more accurate.

A third strength of this study was that the results closely aligned with the results of other studies concerning both text-based discussions and student confidence as it relates to text-based discussions. The study by Kim (2010) concluded that coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions were an effective intervention to use with English Language Learners, and the present study strongly supports this claim. Additionally, in a study by Kim (2008), English Language Learners who participated in discussions with scaffolded teacher talk tended to take more risks. In a similar manner, students who received coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions also showed the most growth in the areas of risk-taking and student confidence.

Limitations

While there were many strengths of this study, there were three major limitations, which, if avoided, could have produced more accurate results. The first limitation was the duration of the study, the second limitation was the sample size of participants of the study, and the third limitation was that it was difficult to determine whether students had comprehended the text.

This study took place over a six-week period that aligned with the last six weeks of the school year. This short duration at the end of the school year posed several problems in collecting data. First, allowing only six weeks to complete the study did not
allow for extra time to collect data if students were absent or if class was shortened or cancelled because of special, end of year events. Several of the discussions were given at different times of the day during other academic classes because students were absent or tardy during the designated time or to avoid interference with field trips or other activities. These difficulties could have been avoided with a longer study that allowed for greater flexibility when collecting data.

A longer study would also allow for more time for students to practice the given intervention. The participants did not receive an intervention during the first week; therefore, the interventions were only given a total of five times. During the sixth week, many of the participants still needed a thorough explanation of the procedures, proving that they had not yet become accustomed to the interventions. For this reason, many of the participants demonstrated minimal growth throughout the six weeks. If the study had been longer than six weeks, the students would have become accustomed to the rubric, become more invested in the activity, and demonstrated enough growth to make even greater distinctions between the effectiveness of the two interventions.

A second limitation of this study was that the sample size of participants was too small to provide accurate data. There were twelve participants in this study, four in each intervention group. While it was beneficial to have one group of each intervention; however, it was not possible to compare the results of each group to those of a similar group. If the study would have had at least twenty-four participants, stronger conclusions could have been made about the effectiveness of each intervention; however, due to time constraints, it was not possible to collect data from six different groups.
The final limitation of this study was that it was difficult to determine whether the participants had comprehended the text. Throughout the study, many of the participants offered limited or off-topic comments. In other cases, the participants showed limited participation throughout the group discussion. The ESL Harkness rubric is designed to measure a student’s ability to engage in text-based discussions, so a failure to participate or offering a limited topic would have demonstrated that student has underdeveloped discussion skills. This does not account for the students’ comprehension of the text, however. All of the participants had various reading levels and may have had varied levels of comprehension of each of the texts. A student with a limited level of comprehension of the given text would have had great difficulty answering any of the discussion questions. This does not necessarily mean that the student has naturally poor discussion skills. The design of this study did not allow for this important distinction.

**Section Three: Recommendations for Future Research**

Upon analyzing the results and the strengths and limitations of this study, it becomes apparent that several additions and changes to this study could result in better results in future research surrounding teacher interventions used during text-based discussions with English Language Learners. It is reasonable, therefore to offer the following three recommendations for future research: 1) complete the same study using a larger participant pool across multiple classrooms, using multiple teachers as facilitators; 2) revise the study to use comprehension checks, or story maps, with each of the groups; and 3) complete the same study over the course of one school year instead of during a six-week period.
The first recommendation for future research is that the same study be completed using a larger participant pool across multiple classrooms, using multiple teachers as facilitators. One limitation of this study was the inability to compare multiple groups using the same intervention. To further validate the results of this study, it is necessary to collect data on a larger pool of students. If at least six groups were studied per classroom in at least four different classrooms, it would be possible to collect data from twenty-four different groups, and a total of ninety-six participants. This would have allowed for a more accurate comparative analysis of the interventions.

The second recommendation for future research is to revise the study to use comprehension checks, or story maps, with each of the groups. Upon facilitating the group discussions, it became apparent that each of the participants had a different level of comprehension of the text. This greatly affected each individual’s ability to engage in the text-based discussion, in turn affecting his or her score. It is important that each participant have a relatively equal comprehension of the text before engaging in the discussion in order to accurately gauge each participant’s discussion skills free of impediment. Adding comprehension checks, or a story mapping activity wherein each participant completes comprehension questions that are then reviewed, would ensure that each participant has a grasp on the content of the text before he or she is asked to discuss the text, improving the validity of the results of the study.

The final recommendation for future research is to complete the same study over the course of one school year instead of during a six-week period. One of the major limitations of this study was the duration of the study. Many of the participants were not used to the discussions by the end of the study. If the study took place over one year, the
interventions would become routine for each of the groups. Additionally, students would gain confidence once they were comfortable with the procedures of the study. While extending the study would not change the validity of the data, it is likely that the participants would score much higher by the end of the study in experience more growth. In other words, a longer study would provide greater benefit for each of the participants.

Section Four: Recommendations for Classroom Teachers

This study yields several recommendations for classroom teachers. First, when conducting text-based discussions, this research study has shown the most effective strategies are scaffolded questions and guided coaching by the teacher. It is recommended that teachers pose questions to students during the instruction and used to support them and help lead them towards higher level questions. Second, while anticipation guides should not be used as a stand alone intervention, they are useful in activating background knowledge prior to the discussion and supporting students in their comprehension of the text being discussed. Third, it is also crucial that teachers support English Language Learners as they develop confidence to take risks during text-based discussions. Providing coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions, or guided scaffolding, throughout the discussion helps students feel successful as they reach towards higher level questions, helping them grow in confidence.

Conclusion

The Speaking and Listening Standards outlined by the Common Core State Standards require that seventh grade students prove their ability to “Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their
own clearly” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). English Language Learners, however, are at a great disadvantage in reaching this standard as they have discussion skills that are less developed than their native English-speaking peers. In this study, the researcher attempted to study ways of bridging this gap by answering the following research question: What is the effect of scaffolding teacher questions on oral discussion skills of English Language Learners?

Twelve seventh grade, English Language Learners were randomly chosen to receive one of three interventions: anticipation guides, coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions, or no intervention. They participated in six text-based discussions over a six-week period and were scored using the ESL Harkness Rubric (Sevigny, 2012).

The results of this study strongly supported the conclusion that coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions, or teacher-guided discussions, are the most effective intervention. While students who received anticipation guides as an intervention demonstrated growth, the growth was not substantial when compared to coaching, facilitating, and collaborating questions as an intervention. The results of this study also supported the conclusion that a teacher intervention leads students to proficiency during text-based group discussions in a more substantial way as compared to providing no teacher intervention.

In summary, while English Language Learners are at a disadvantage and often score lower than their native English-speaking peers, this gap can be bridged through strategic teacher intervention. Through future research, teachers of English Language
Learners will have access to a greater bank of interventions that lead English Language Learners to growth that closes the achievement gap.
### Appendix A:

#### Student Groupings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Student ID Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group #1</td>
<td>Anticipation Guide</td>
<td>1, 4, 7, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #2</td>
<td>Coaching, Facilitating, and Collaborating Questions</td>
<td>2, 5, 8, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group #3</td>
<td>No Intervention</td>
<td>3, 6, 9, 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B:

Student Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ID Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Directions:** Circle the letter that *BEST* describes your habits.

1. Before a class discussion, I always…
   a. decide not to complete the reading.
   b. look at the text, but I don’t read it.
   c. read the text to prepare.
   d. read the text, take notes, and look up words that I don’t know to prepare.
   e. read the text, take notes, look up words that I don’t know, and write down my questions to prepare.

2. During a class discussion, I feel most comfortable when…
   a. I stay quiet and don’t participate.
   b. I pay attention to the discussion but don’t talk.
   c. I say a few things.
   d. I share many of my ideas and answer some of the easier questions.
   e. I share many of my ideas and answer challenging questions.

3. During a class discussion, I can…
   a. I don’t feel like I can do anything to contribute to the discussion.
   b. ask questions and make comments at the beginning of the discussion, but I feel uncomfortable saying things once the discussion has started.
   c. answer questions when I am called on, but I feel uncomfortable jumping into the conversation.
   d. ask questions of the group, use specific details, and agree with my group members.
   e. add my own ideas often, use specific details, and ask deeper questions of the group.

4. During a class discussion, my body language shows that…
   a. I do not care about participating.
   b. I am listening to the group, but I don’t give eye contact to the speaker.
   c. I am actively listening to the group, and I sometimes give eye contact to the speaker.
   d. I usually give eye contact to the speaker, and I am obviously interested in
the topic.
  e. I always give eye contact to the speaker, look back at the text for answers, and sit up straight.

5. During a class discussion, I am confident that I can…
   a. I am not confident that I can contribute.
   b. make a few comments, even if I say something wrong.
   c. make strong connections between ideas, but sometimes the ideas are not my own.
   d. make strong connections between ideas and support my ideas with textual evidence.
   e. make strong connections between ideas and support my ideas with textual evidence to show my own interpretation of the text.

6. During a class discussion, I use the text by…
   a. I don’t use the text. My text is often blank.
   b. writing notes on my text, but I don’t use it during the discussion.
   c. looking for textual evidence that my group members find, but I don’t usually look for textual evidence on my own.
   d. using textual evidence to support the ideas I share. Most of the time I share textual evidence by reading it to the group.
   e. always using textual evidence to support the ideas I share. Most of the time I share textual evidence by summarizing or paraphrasing a part of the text.

Student Survey Score

_________________ X 0 = ______________
Total “a” Responses

_________________ X 1 = ______________
Total “b” Responses

_________________ X 2 = ______________
Total “c” Responses

_________________ X 3 = ______________
Total “d” Responses

_________________ X 4 = ______________
Total “e” Responses

Total score: ______________
Appendix C:

Discussion Questions

Week 1- *La Linea* by Ann Jaramillo
1. How does the title connect to the main ideas of this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What cultural knowledge does the reader need to understand this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What can you infer about the author’s views on immigration? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. In your opinion, how might this text be different if it were told 50 years into the future?

Week 2- *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis
1. How does the title connect to the main ideas of this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What cultural knowledge does the reader need to understand this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What can you infer about the author’s views on women’s rights? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. In your opinion, how might this text be different if it were told 50 years into the future?

Week 3- *The Skin I’m In* by Sharon Flake
1. How does the title connect to the main ideas of this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What cultural knowledge does the reader need to understand this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What can you infer about the author’s views on bullying? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. In your opinion, how might this text be different if it were told 50 years into the future?
Week 4- *Ninth Ward* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
1. How does the title connect to the main ideas of this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What cultural knowledge does the reader need to understand this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What can you infer about the author’s views on bullying? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. In your opinion, how might this text be different if it were told 50 years into the future?

Week 5- *About Feeling Jewish* by Jean Little
1. How does the title connect to the main ideas of this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What cultural knowledge does the reader need to understand this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What can you infer about the author’s views on religion? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. In your opinion, how might this text be different if it were told 50 years into the future?

Week 6- *Why Chicken Means So Much to Me* by Sherman Alexie
1. How does the title connect to the main ideas of this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What cultural knowledge does the reader need to understand this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What can you infer about the author’s views on poverty? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. In your opinion, how might this text be different if it were told 50 years into the future?
**Appendix D:**

**Anticipation Guide**

*La Linea* by Ann Jaramillo - Anticipation Guide

Mark whether or not you agree or disagree with each statement to the left of the statement. When you’re finished reading the text, decide whether you still agree or disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Mexican immigrants who cross the border into the United States illegally face many challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. When traveling through the desert, it is important to stay covered and talk as little as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. It is always hard to follow complicated directions when you only hear them one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Once Mexican immigrants cross the border into the United States, they are safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Young people are capable of doing incredible things, despite their age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. It is dangerous to spend many days in the desert.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After Reading</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Planning for Discussion</td>
<td>Risk-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Did not complete reading; Does not have materials</td>
<td>No participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brings reading and note paper but seems disorganized. Appears not to have prepared.</td>
<td>Only non-verbal participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minimally-prepared Completed reading; has some materials.</td>
<td>Comments and questions are made occasionally, and speaker tries to make idea understood, but needs help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Has all materials, Completed reading, took notes, Looked up key words, asks carefully prepared questions</td>
<td>Speaker often makes her idea understood, but could share more openly. Asks or answers reasonable but not challenging questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Well prepared Completed and comprehended reading, took notes, Looked up key words, researched key background information, and predicted important discussion threads; has challenging questions and comments with text references</td>
<td>Demonstrates great trust in her own understanding and shares her ideas, no matter how rough; dares to go deeper in asking and answering challenging questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Takes taken ____  Text references ____
References


