Overview and a Conceptual Framework for Discussions

Ian A. G. Wilkinson

The Ohio State University

IRA Reading Research 2005

Paper in symposium, *Engaging students in discussions to promote high-level comprehension of texts,* presented at the Reading Research conference of the International Reading Association, San Antonio, April 30, 2005.

Overview and a Conceptual Framework for Discussions

As documented in the RAND Report (Snow, 2002), there is concern about the increasing demands on high school graduates for a high degree of literacy, including the capacity to comprehend complex text. This concern is especially pressing in light of the increasing need for high-level literacy associated with rapid technological change (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). In response to these concerns, this symposium focuses on the use of group discussions to promote students' high-level comprehension of text in elementary as well as high school settings. The presentations will describe the first results from a 3-year project funded by the Institute of Education Sciences under the Program of Research on Reading Comprehension.

We use the term 'high-level comprehension' to refer to critical, reflective thinking about and around text. High-level comprehension requires that students engage with text in an epistemic mode to acquire not only deep knowledge of the topic but also knowledge about how to think about the topic and the capability to reflect on one's own thinking (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993). We regard it as very similar to what Resnick (1987) defined as higher-order thinking, a process that involves "elaborating, adding complexity, and going beyond the given" (p. 42). Related terms are 'literate thinking,' 'critical thinking,' and 'reasoning.'

There are good theoretical reasons why group discussions should promote students' high-level comprehension of texts. According to Piaget (1928), social interaction is a primary means of promoting individual reasoning. In the context of the group discussion, students are encouraged to make public their perspectives on issues arising from the text, consider alternative perspectives proposed by peers, and attempt to reconcile conflicts among opposing points of view.

According to socio-cultural theory (Wertsch, Del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995), when students interact with others in a group, something collective is produced that is more than the result of the abilities and dispositions of the individuals who comprise the group. Each student brings to the discussion social and cultural values, unique background experiences, prior knowledge and assumptions. In addition, propositional knowledge about the text's content, procedural knowledge regarding how one interacts with the text, and metacognitive skills regarding one's thoughts about the discussion process contribute to the development of literate thinking (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993). This dialogic process, created through the group, is negotiated and sustained through interpretations of text, high-level reasoning, and standards of interaction that govern group behavior.

Similarly, Bakhtin's work (1981) suggests that reasoning is inherently dialogical. According to Anderson et al. (2001, p. 2), "thinkers must hear several voices within their own heads representing different perspectives on the issue. The ability and disposition to take more than one perspective arises from participating in discussions with others who hold different perspectives" (see also Reznitskaya et al., 2001).

The purpose of the project is to identify converging evidence on the use of group discussions to promote high-level comprehension of text and to advance understanding of how teachers can implement discussions and assess their effects in ways that are sensitive to instructional goals. Our objectives are to: (1) develop a conceptual framework for understanding different approaches to conducting group discussions that focuses on key decisions teachers make to define the instructional frame for the discussion; (2) examine evidence of the effects of different approaches to conducting group discussions, including estimation of the magnitude of effects and analysis of the discourse for indicators of quality discussions; and (3) develop a

model of discussion to help teachers facilitate quality discussions and assess students' high-level thinking and comprehension of texts.

Figure 1 outlines the overall organization of the project. Three studies are being conducted: Study 1 (Year 1) is a synthesis of extant research on group discussions designed to promote high-level comprehension of text. It includes: developing the conceptual framework for understanding different approaches to conducting group discussions; examining evidence of the effects of different approaches to conducting group discussions, including estimation of the magnitude of effects via meta-analysis; and examining assessment tools that have been used to assess group and individual functioning during and after group discussion. This study lays the foundation for the other studies. Study 2 (Year 2) seeks to validate and extend the findings from Study 1 by evaluating the discussion approaches on a common set of discourse features known to characterize 'quality' discussions. Study 3 (Year 3) builds on Studies 1 and 2 to develop a model of discussion that promotes high-level comprehension of text and assessments that should be sensitive to students' high-level thinking and comprehension. It involves implementing a year-long professional development program for 4th- through 6th-grade language arts teachers and, using a quasi-experimental design, examining teachers' implementation of our model and assessing the impact of discussions on students' high-level thinking and comprehension. Additionally, these studies have spawned a number of substudies that are being conducted in support of the larger project. In this symposium, we present initial results from the first two years of the project.

Procedurally, we worked in subgroups, each comprising a PI and graduate associate (GA). Each subgroup took responsibility for reviewing a subset of the literature defined by the literary stance presumed to be dominant in the discussion approaches. Anna Soter and her GA

reviewed research on approaches in which an aesthetic stance toward the text was presumed to be primary; Ian Wilkinson and his GA reviewed research on approaches in which an efferent stance was presumed primary; and Karen Murphy and her GA reviewed research on approaches in which a critical-analytic stance was presumed primary.

We conducted exhaustive reviews of the literatures on discussion practices as they relate to the promotion of students' high-level thinking and comprehension of text, by carrying out systematic searches of 5 major databases in the social sciences (*ERIC*, *Education Abstracts*, *PsycINFO*, *Social Sciences Citation Index*, *Digital Dissertations)*, keyed on proponents' names and titles of the approaches. These searches were conducted in 2001 and 2002, prior to the start of the project, and updated in April 2003. We also checked secondary citations, other printed sources, and associated web sites. Where possible, we viewed videos showing the implementation of each approach in classrooms. We summarized every reference pertinent to the approaches in a highly customized *EndNote* library using a common set of fields. The library now comprises almost 1000 references. Based on the summaries, each subgroup wrote working papers on their respective approaches. These working papers included information on the origins and goals of the approaches, theoretical bases, what the approaches look like in action, and narrative descriptions of all empirical studies of the approaches.

Based on this work, we identified 9 approaches to conducting discussion. To qualify for primary focus in our synthesis, an approach to discussion must have consistency of application and an established place in educational research or practice based on a record of peer-reviewed, empirical research conducted in the last three decades. The 9 identified discussion approaches are: *Book Club* (BC) (Raphael & McMahon, 1994), *Collaborative Reasoning* (CR) Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998), *Paideia Seminars* (PS) (Billings & Fitzgerald, 2002),

Grand Conversations (GCs) (Eeds & Wells, 1989), *Instructional Conversations* (ICs) (Goldenberg, 1993), *Junior Great Books Discussions* (JGB) (Great Books Foundation, 1987), *Literature Circles* (LCs) (Short & Pierce, 1990), *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) (Sharp, 1995), and *Questioning the Author* (QtA) (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997). These approaches serve various purposes depending on the goals teachers set for their students: to acquire information on an efferent level, to adopt a critical or analytic stance, and/or to respond to literature on an aesthetic level. Each approach contains some type of instructional frame that describes the role of the teacher, the nature of the group, type of text, and so forth. Although the goals of these approaches are not identical, all purport to help students develop high-level thinking and comprehension of text.

We found research on literature circles difficult to identify, as this approach is somewhat amorphous. Nevertheless, literature circles constitute a recognized way of discussing literary text. To identify relevant research on literature circles, we consulted seminal work on the topic and developed inductively a prototypical model of a literature circle, comprising features that are typically present in this approach. A discussion must have had a majority of these features to be classified as a literature circle (e.g., as distinct from a general literature discussion group).

The first paper in the symposium presents a conceptual framework for understanding the approaches to conducting discussions. This framework describes the similarities and differences among the approaches in terms of various parameters of group discussion. The second paper presents results of a meta-analysis of quantitative studies, examining evidence of the effects on measures of teacher-student discourse as well as on individual comprehension and learning outcomes. The third paper describes a model for conducting productive discussion that comprises an instructional frame, a set of pedagogical principles, and language tools and

discourse moves to promote productive talk about text. Taken together, these papers provide converging evidence on the use of group discussions to promote high-level comprehension, and they advance our understanding of how teachers can use discussions in ways that are sensitive to instructional goals and to the contexts in which they work.

In the rest of my presentation, I describe a conceptual framework for understanding similarities and differences among the approaches to conducting group discussions. To date, educators have not had a means of making sense of the myriad of methods, their similarities and differences and strengths and weaknesses. The framework will describe the approaches in terms of key decisions teachers make to define parameters of the instructional frame for discussion.

Developing a Framework

We began by locating the approaches on values of the discussion parameters identified by Chinn, Anderson, and Waggoner (2001): the nature of the literary stance toward text (in their terms, *efferent, aesthetic*, and *critical-analytic*), who has *interpretive authority,* who has *control of topic*, and who *controls turns* for speaking. To these, we added parameters suggested by Hanssen (1990) as well as others that we thought captured important variation among the approaches: who *chooses the text*, what *genre* was used, when does *reading* occur, was discussion *whole class or a small group*, was the group *homogeneous or heterogeneous* in ability, was the group *teacher- or peer-led*, and to what degree was discussion focused on *authorial intent*. In total, we characterized the approaches on 13 parameters.

Method

Each subgroup coded their respective approaches on the 13 parameters as they read all references, empirical and non-empirical, describing the approaches. Coders also viewed videos of the discussions where possible. Relative values on the parameters across the 9 approaches

were then moderated at meetings of the 3 principal investigators. Some parameters required only low-inference judgments (controls of turns, choice of text, genre, reading before/during, whole-class/small-group, homogeneous/heterogeneous group, teacher-/student-led); others required a high degree of inference (stances, interpretive authority, control of topic, authorial intent). Initially, we adopted a top-down approach, assuming that values of parameters would be the same for every study or description of a given approach. Later, we adopted a bottom-up approach and coded separately each reference in our *EndNote* database so parameter values could vary (ratings of stance were always an exception; for stance, we made global judgments based on our overall understanding of each approach, because only partial information was available from the discourse excerpts in published documents). We then tallied the number of references on each approach by values of each parameter. This confirmed our initial characterization of the approaches. We did not establish reliabilities for the coding; instead, we sought consensus judgments among the 3 principal investigators.

When coding the approaches in terms of literary stance, we allowed for an approach to have different emphases on all 3 dimensions, and we coded stance as realized in excerpts of the discourse rather than as espoused in proponents' descriptions. To do this, we examined excerpts in the published literature and videos of the discussions. We defined an efferent stance as a text-focused response in which discussion that gives prominence to reading to acquire and retrieve information. In this stance, the focus is on "the ideas, information, directions, conclusions to be retained, used, or acted on after the reading event" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.27). We defined a critical-analytic stance as a more objective, critical response in which discussion gives prominence to interrogating or querying the text in search of the underlying arguments, assumptions, worldviews, or beliefs (Wade, Thompson, & Watkins, 1994). This stance engages

the reader's querying mind, prompting him or her to ask questions. We took issue with the term 'aesthetic' as applied to the discussions we observed because, in our judgment, few actually attained a truly aesthetic response. Instead, we chose to use the term 'expressive' stance (Jakobson, 1987) to describe a reader-focused response. In this stance, discussion gives prominence to the reader's affective response to the text, to the reader's own spontaneous, emotive connection to all aspects of the textual experience (see Soter & Chen, 2005).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows our characterization of each discussion approach in terms of the 13 parameters. Four features are relatively invariant across approaches. First, teacher-led groups are employed in all discussion approaches except Literature Circles and Book Club. Second, heterogeneous ability groups are used in all cases except Collaborative Reasoning (and in this approach both groupings are used and the type of grouping seems incidental to its implementation). Second, narrative fiction is used in all approaches. However, although narrative fiction is used in QtA, expository text is its primary focus. Indeed, QtA is the only approach designed specifically to help students' grapple with the meaning of expository text. Third, reading of the text takes place before the group is assembled in all cases except in QtA and Instructional Conversations. An often-cited feature of QtA is that students read the text 'online' as they are engaged in discussion. Because QtA focuses on expository text, where there is a high degree of emphasis on an efferent stance, reading the text during discussion helps foster students' engagement and text-focused response.

Most variation across approaches is in the degree of control exerted by the teacher versus the students in terms of control of topic, interpretive authority, control of turns, choice of text, and relative standing on the three stances. Moreover, there seems to be a relationship between

degree of control and realized stance. Discussions in which students have the greatest control tend to be those that give prominence to an expressive response to the text (Literature Circles, Grand Conversations, and Book Club). These discussions are usually peer-led. Conversely, discussions in which teachers have the greatest control tend to be those that give prominence to an efferent stance (QtA, Instructional Conversations, Junior Great Books). The remaining approaches (Paideia Seminar, Collaborative Reasoning, Philosophy for Children) fall between these extremes. In these approaches, the teacher has considerable control over text and topic, but students have considerable interpretive authority and, to some extent, control of turns. These approaches give prominence to a critical-analytic stance.

Validation Study

To support our theorizing about the conceptual framework, we conducted a study to validate our ratings of stance and of the other high-inference parameters (who has control of topic, who has interpretive authority, emphasis on authorial intent).

Method

We selected three half-page excerpts of transcripts from the published literature for each of the nine approaches, for a total of 27 transcripts, standardized the transcription conventions, and provided capsule descriptions of the classroom or group contexts in which the discussions took place (e.g., grade level of the students, text read) following a common schema. Using a sampling framework akin to matrix sampling, we administered three randomly selected excerpts, representing the expressive, efferent, and critical-analytic emphases respectively, to 364 undergraduate students in education at Pennsylvania State University and to 157 masters and doctoral students in education at Ohio State University (most drawn from programs in language, literacy, and culture). Order of presentation of the transcripts, by presumed stance, in student

packets was counterbalanced to minimize order effects. Students were asked to read through each transcript and to rate each excerpt on stance and degree of focus on authorial intention using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1="very little" to 5="very much." Students were also asked to decide who had control of topic and who had interpretive authority by choosing one of three options: "teacher," "students," or "teacher and students." We gave students oral instructions and a one-page handout explaining each of the parameters on which the discussions were to be rated. The same number of students read each transcript. Means, standard deviations, and frequencies of ratings on the six high-inference parameters, across the nine approaches, were calculated to examine the degree of agreement with our own ratings.

Results and Discussion

Tables 2 and 3 show the undergraduate and graduate students' rating on the six high-inference parameters (for comparison, results have been summarized in terms of the language used in Table 1). All discrepancies relative to our original coding are shown in red. Undergraduate and graduate students were remarkably consistent in their ratings, except in ratings of stance for what we consider to be the more critical-analytic approaches (Paideia Seminar, Collaborative Reasoning, and Philosophy for Children). In terms of control of topic and who has interpretive authority, students' ratings showed some minor disagreements relative to our ratings. Some of these disagreements can be explained by the nature of the transcripts available for them to. Nevertheless, results from the validation study showed a high degree of student control in those approaches that give prominence to an expressive stance, a high degree of teacher control in those approaches that give prominence to an efferent stance, and shared control (between teachers and students) in those approaches that give prominence to a critical-analytic stance.

In terms of stance, students' ratings were in agreement with ours in suggesting that Literature Circles, Grand Conversations, and Book Club give prominence to an expressive stance; and that Questioning the Author, Instructional Conversations, and Junior Great Books give prominence to an efferent stance. Ratings of stance from transcripts of Paideia Seminar, Collaborative Reasoning, and Philosophy for Children discussions were not always in agreement with ours and showed considerable inconsistency between the undergraduate and graduate students. We speculate that these approaches are relatively high on all stances, though especially on the critical-analytic, and that students had difficulty differentiating the relative standing of these approaches on each of the three stances based on the half-page excerpts.

Table 4 shows the actual means and standard deviations of ratings of stance (on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1="very little" to 5="very much) by students' educational level and our presumed stance. These ratings suggest that students were easily able to differentiate among stances on transcripts from the expressive and efferent approaches, and that their ratings are largely in agreement with ours. However, it appears that both undergraduates and graduates had difficulty describing the relative standings on stances on transcripts from the presumed critical-analytic approaches.

Students' ratings of the approaches in terms of focus on authorial intention largely disagreed with ours. They rated every approach as low on authorial intention. It seems that students were unable to rate reliably the approaches in terms of focus on authorial intent based on the transcripts we provided.

Member Check

We also asked the developers or proponents of the discussion approaches to rate their respective approaches on each of our parameters, plus a number of additional items (nature of

any pre- or post-discussion activities, and student population served). We treated this as a form of member check to see if our characterization was consistent with those of the experts associated with the approaches.

Method

We e-mailed a 16-item questionnaire asking the developers or proponents to check boxes next to the options that best described their discussion approach. Items pertaining to stances were worded as follows: "Compared to other discussion approaches you know, to what extent does the discussion reflect an {stance} toward the text?" We then provided a description of the stance and the appropriate bibliographic citation. The item pertaining to interpretive authority was worded as follows: "Compared to other discussion approaches you know, to what extent does the discussion attempt to discern the author's intentions?" Again, we provided a description of what was meant by authorial intention. Every item in the questionnaire provided opportunities for respondents to provide open-ended responses as needed. In the cases of JGB, PS, and P4C, we contacted key personnel at the Great Books Foundation, The Paideia Center, and the Philosophy for Children Institute, respectively, instead of the original developers of these approaches (who were either deceased or retired). In the case of LCs, we contacted two major proponents to better represent the nature of this approach (their responses were almost entirely in agreement). We received completed member checks from every person contacted.

Results and Discussion

Table 5 shows results from the member check. Again, discrepancies relative to our original coding are shown in red. In terms of who has control of topic, who has interpretive authority, and who has control of turns, developers/proponents of the efferent approaches tended to characterize their approaches as evidencing more shared control (than teacher control), in

comparison to our ratings. This tendency was also apparent for Paideia Seminar and Philosophy for Children. Proponents/developers of all approaches, except Instructional Conversations, regarded their approaches as applicable with a greater range of genre than we had seen in their published literature. The characterizations of stance by proponents/developers of the more expressive or more efferent approaches were largely in disagreement with ours. In particular, proponents/developers of Instructional Conversations and Junior Great Books rated their approaches as giving more prominence to the critical-analytic stance (than to the efferent), in comparison to our ratings.

The reasons for these discrepancies are several. First, proponents/developers of the approaches tended to characterize their respective approaches in 'ideal' or intended form rather than how the approaches were actually realized in practice. Second, some discrepancies occurred because proponents/developers were sensitive to the gradual release of responsibility for conducting discussions from teachers to students that may occur over time (cf. Pearson & Gallagher, 1983)--a feature that was not apparent to us from descriptions of the approaches in the published literature. For example, small groups in Collaborative Reasoning are initially all teacher-led, but as students become acculturated into the discourse community, they might better be characterized as peer-led. Finally, it must be remembered that the bases for proponents/developers' relative judgments differed from ours. Proponents/developers characterized their respective approaches relative to others they knew; we made judgments based on our collective knowledge of all nine approaches.

Proponents/developers' ratings on authorial intention also largely disagreed with ours. Again, the discrepancies might be due to the different bases used by proponents/developers' in making their relative judgments. However, given results from the validation study, it is possible

that we have not well defined this construct and that respondents misinterpreted what was meant by focus on authorial intention.

Conclusions

We have yet to reconcile the discrepancies between the ways we have characterized the discussion approaches and results from our validation study and member check. We need to revisit the nature of the transcripts rated in the validation study in light of students' responses. We also need to interview proponents/developers' about the ways they characterized their respective approaches, particularly in regard to the low-inference parameters (controls of turns, choice of text, genre, reading before/during, whole-class/small-group, homogeneous or heterogeneous group, teacher-/student-led).

Nevertheless, it seems clear that there is a relationship between the control exerted by teachers versus students in discussions and the realized stance. Discussions in which students have the greatest control tend to be those that give prominence to an expressive stance (Literature Circles, Grand Conversations, and Book Club). Discussions in which teachers have the greatest control tend to be those that give prominence to an efferent stance (Questioning the Author, Instructional Conversations, Junior Great Books). Discussions in which teachers and students share control tend to be those that give prominence to the critical-analytic stance (Paideia Seminar, Collaborative Reasoning, Philosophy for Children) at least as we have rated these approaches. In the critical-analytic approaches, the teacher has considerable control over text and topic, but students have considerable interpretive authority and, to some extent control over turn taking (i.e., a more open participation structure).

There also seem to be important relationships within the ratings of stance. Ratings of discussion in terms of the extent to which they realize an efferent and an expressive stance seem

to be relatively independent of each other. A reasonable degree of focus on reading to acquire and retrieve information is probably necessary for students to make an affective response to the text, but a high level of focus on reading for information does not automatically mean students make an affective connection. However, our ratings suggest that at least a reasonable degree of focus on the efferent and the expressive stances needs to be in place in order for discussion to foster a high critical-analytic response to text. Presumably, a reasonable degree of knowledge-driven and affective engagement is necessary (though not sufficient) for students to interrogate or query the text in search of its underlying arguments, assumptions, worldviews, or beliefs.

We speculate that the shared control between teacher and students, alluded to above, is the group-level substrate that helps give rise to efferent and expressive responses; further, we speculate that at least a moderate degree of emphasis on the efferent and expressive is necessary for the critical-analytic stance to achieve prominence. These speculations remain tentative (we have only 8 degrees of freedom from which to infer these relationships) pending results from other aspects of our project. Moreover, the emphases on stances and the relationships among them are probably contingent on an amalgam of other factors--the kinds of questions teachers (and students) ask, the nature of any pre-discussion activity, and the culture of the discourse community--all of which are yet to be explored.

Table 1. Group Discussion Project team's ratings of discussion approaches by parameters

DISCUSSION APPROACH									
PARAMETERS	**LC**	**GC**	**BC**	**QtA**	**IC**	**JGB**	**PS**	**CR**	**P4C**
Control of Topic	Students	Students	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Interpretive Authority	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students
Control of Turns	Students	Students	Students	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Teacher
Chooses Text	Students	Teacher	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Teacher or Student Led	Students	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Grouping by Ability	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Homo/Hetero geneous	Hetero-geneous
Reading Before/During	Before	Before	Before	During	During	Before	Before	Before	Before
Genre	Narrative Fiction	Narrative Fiction	Narrative Fiction	Expository/ Narrative Fiction	Narrative Fiction	Narrative Fiction	Expository Narrative Fiction	Narrative Fiction	Narrative Fiction
Whole Class/ Small Group	Small Group	Small Group	Small Group	Whole Class	Whole Class/ Small Group	Whole Class	Whole Class	Small Group	Whole Class
Expressive	High	High	High	Low/Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Efferent	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Critical-Analytic	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Authorial Intention	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Low/Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

Table 2. Undergraduate students' ratings of discussion approaches on high-inference parameters: Validation study (discrepancies in red)

	DISCUSSION APPROACH								
PARAMETERS	**LC**	**GC**	**BC**	**QtA**	**IC**	**JGB**	**PS**	**CR**	**P4C**
Control of Topic	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher
Interpretive Authority	Students	Students	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher
Control of Turns									
Chooses Text									
Teacher or Peer Led									
Grouping by Ability									
Reading Before/During									
Genre									
Whole Class/ Small Group									
Expressive	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Medium
Efferent	Low	Medium	Low	High	High	High	Low	High	Low
Critical-Analytic	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	High
Authorial Intention	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Table 3. Graduate students' ratings of discussion approaches on high-inference parameters: Validation study (discrepancies in red)

DISCUSSION APPROACH									
PARAMETERS	**LC**	**GC**	**BC**	**QtA**	**IC**	**JGB**	**PS**	**CR**	**P4C**
Control of Topic	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher
Interpretive Authority	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students
Control of Turns									
Chooses Text									
Teacher or Peer Led									
Grouping by Ability									
Reading Before/During									
Genre									
Whole Class/ Small Group									
Expressive	High	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High
Efferent	Low	Medium	Low	High	High	High	Medium	Low	Low
Critical-Analytic	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Authorial Intention	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of ratings of stance by students' educational level and presumed stance: Validation study

Ed. Level	Stance		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Undergraduate	Expressive	Expressive ratings	362	3.92	1.07
		Efferent ratings	361	2.91	1.26
		Critical-analytic ratings	361	2.95	1.18
	Efferent	Expressive ratings	363	3.15	1.26
		Efferent ratings	363	3.60	1.12
		Critical-analytic ratings	360	3.42	1.19
	Critical-Analytic	Expressive ratings	363	3.36	1.30
		Efferent ratings	363	3.17	1.30
		Critical-analytic ratings	363	3.30	1.22
Graduate	Expressive	Expressive ratings	156	4.04	1.10
		Efferent ratings	157	2.80	1.36
		Critical-analytic ratings	157	2.95	1.28
	Efferent	Expressive ratings	157	2.82	1.38
		Efferent ratings	156	3.55	1.31
		Critical-analytic ratings	156	3.10	1.33
	Critical-Analytic	Expressive ratings	156	3.29	1.38
		Efferent ratings	157	3.06	1.35
		Critical-analytic ratings	157	3.52	1.29

Table 5. Developers/proponents' ratings of discussion approaches by parameters: Member check (discrepancies are in red)

DISCUSSION APPROACH									
PARAMETERS	**LC**	**GC**	**BC**	**QtA**	**IC**	**JGB**	**PS**	**CR**	**P4C**
Control of Topic	Students	Students	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Teacher	Students
Interpretive Authority	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher
Control of Turns	Students/ Teachers	Students	Students	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher
Chooses Text	Students	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Students
Teacher or Student Led	Students/ Teacher	Students	Students/ Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher	Students/ Teacher
Grouping by Ability	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Homo/Hetero-geneous	Homo/Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous	Hetero-geneous
Reading Before/During	Before	During	Before	During	Before/ During	Before	Before	Before	During
Genre	All	Narrative Fiction/Acc/ Exposition	All	All	Narrative Fiction	All	All	Narrative Fiction/ Exposition	All
Whole Class/ Small Group	Small Group	Small Group	Small Group	Whole Class	Small Group	Whole Class/ Small Group	Whole Class	Small Group	Whole Class/ Small Group
Expressive	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Efferent	Low/Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Critical-Analytic	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
Authorial Intention	Low/High	Low	High	High	High	High	Medium	Low	Low

References

Anderson, R.C., Chinn, C., Waggoner, M., & Nguyen, K. (1998). Intellectually stimulating story discussions. In J. Osborn & F. Lehr (Eds.), *Literacy for all: Issues in teaching and learning*. New York: Guilford Press.

Anderson, R.C., Nguyen-Jahiel, K., McNurlen, B., Archodidou, A., Kim, S., Reznitskaya, A., Tillmanns, M., & Gilbert, L. (2001). The snowball phenomenon: Spread of ways of talking and ways of thinking across groups of children. *Cognition and Instruction*, 19, 1-46.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (M. Holquist, Ed., & Trans., C. Emerson, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., Sinatra, G. M., & Loxterman, J. A. (1991). Revising social studies text from a text processing perspective: Evidence of improved comprehensibility. *Reading Research Quarterly, 26*, 251-276.

Billings, L., & Fitzgerald, J. (2002). Dialogic discussion and the Paideia seminar. *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(4), 907-941.

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A.L., & Cocking, R.R. (1999). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Chang-Wells, G. L. M., & Wells, G. (1993). Dynamics of discourse: Literacy and the construction of knowledge. In E. A. Forman, N. Minick & C. A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 58-90). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chinn, C. A., Anderson, R. C., & Waggoner, M. A. (2001). Patterns of Discourse in Two Kinds of Literature Discussion. *Reading Research Quarterly,* 35(4), 1-36.

Eeds, M. & Wells, D. (1989). Grand conversations: An explanation of meaning construction in literature study groups. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 32, 4-29.

Goldenberg, C. (1993). Instructional conversations: Promoting comprehension through discussion. *The Reading Teacher, 46*(4), 316-326.

Great Books Foundation. (1987). *An introduction to shared inquiry*. Chicago: Author.

Hanssen, E. (1990). Planning for literature circles: Variations in focus and structure. In K. G. Short & K. M. Piece (Eds.), *Talking about books: Creating literate communities* (pp. 199-209). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Jakobson, R. (1987). *Language in literature.* In K. Pomorska & S. Rudy, (Eds.), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pearson, P.D., & Gallagher, M.C. (1983). The instruction of reading comprehension. *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 8, 20-22.

Raphael, T.E. & McMahon, S.I. (1994). Book Club: An alternative framework for reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, *48*, 102-116.

Resnick, L. B. (1987). *Education and learning to think.* Report. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Reznitskaya, A., Anderson, R.C., McNurlen, B., Nguyen-Jahiel, K., Archodidou, A., & Kim, S. (2001). Influence of oral discussion on written argument. Discourse Processes, 32 (2&3), 155-175.

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

Sharp, A. M. (1995). Philosophy for children and the development of ethical values. *Early Child*

Development and Care, 107, 45-55.

Short, K. G., & Pierce, K. M. (Eds.) (1990). *Talking about books: Creating literate communities*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

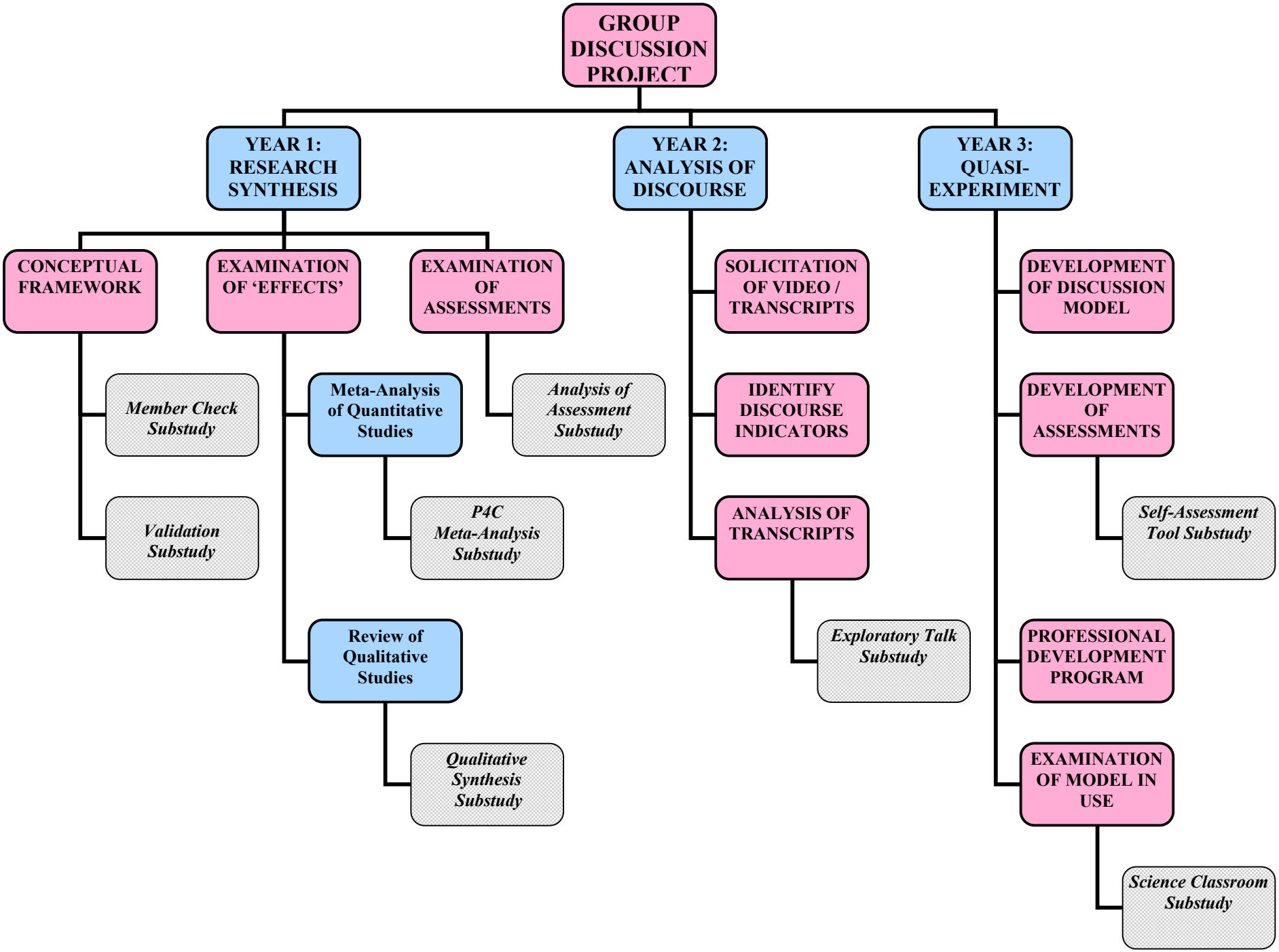
Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

Wade, S., Thompson, A., & Watkins, W. (1994). The role of belief systems in authors' and readers' construction of texts. In R. Garner & P. A. Alexander (Eds.), *Beliefs about texts and instruction with text* (pp. 265-293). Hillsdale, NJ: Erbaum.

Wertsch, J. V., Del Rio, P., & Alvarez, A. (Eds.) (1995). *Sociocultural studies of mind*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Summary chart showing overall organization of group discussion project


GROUP DISCUSSION PROJECT
YEAR 1: RESEARCH SYNTHESIS
YEAR 2: ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE
YEAR 3: QUASI-EXPERIMENT
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
EXAMINATION OF 'EFFECTS'
EXAMINATION OF ASSESSMENTS
SOLICITATION OF VIDEO / TRANSCRIPTS
DEVELOPMENT OF DISCUSSION MODEL
Member Check Substudy
Meta-Analysis of Quantitative Studies
Analysis of Assessment Substudy
IDENTIFY DISCOURSE INDICATORS
DEVELOPMENT OF ASSESSMENTS
Validation Substudy
P4C Meta-Analysis Substudy
ANALYSIS OF TRANSCRIPTS
Self-Assessment Tool Substudy
Review of Qualitative Studies
Exploratory Talk Substudy
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Qualitative Synthesis Substudy
EXAMINATION OF MODEL IN USE
Science Classroom Substudy