University of Nevada Reno

Multi-case Study of Teachers of Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders and Literacy Instruction: Teachers' Views and Practices

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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by

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Abstract

The study explores two teachers' beliefs and literacy instruction in self-contained classrooms with adolescents identified with emotional and behavioral disorders. Data are presented from participant observations and interviews collected over a three-month period in two middle school classrooms. Qualitative analysis investigates the literacy instructional activities the two teachers used and those teachers' beliefs and rationales for using those activities. Themes regarding instructional participation structures and teachers' beliefs are presented in addition to the interaction patterns that occur within those participation structures. The use of mediated social interaction and meaningful activities during instruction as well as the congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices are discussed. Findings are also discussed regarding the continued struggle between managing student behavior and implementing rigorous instruction in settings for students with emotional and behavior disorders.

Dedicated to John J. Flaherty

Acknowledgements

Naming just one or two people to acknowledge at this point is not possible since it's been a <u>very</u> long road, but I know where to begin….to my sisters in spirit: Nicole and Kristy, wow, we've done it! I have a host of girlfriends and other supporters to whom I owe a lot: My Yentas—we have been through a lot together, just add Doctorate to that mountain of experiences; the whole Kattelman family for sharing their home with me many a night; to the Humphreys' family, Evan, Kelly, Connor, Xander and Bailey—thanks for the "thinking space". To all who were a constant source of positive energy and encouragement: Lea, Tavia, Niki, Greg, Heather, Smerkers…that belief in me really did help! To my advisors, Chris and Cindy: your nudging and prodding in my ZPD paid off in the end! To my Mom and Dad, thanks for your help and support when I needed it. To my sister Nora and my other sister in spirit, Liz: you guys keep me alive!

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To everyone and anyone who has encouraged me and supported me in this endeavor for the past ten years: Wow, I did it!

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Each year over 60 percent of adolescents with emotional/behavioral

disorders (EBD) who are of graduating age do not graduate from public school with

a regular diploma despite the fact that they are supposed to be afforded the right to

a free and appropriate public education under federal law (U.S. Department of

Education, 2006). One possible reason for the academic failure of students identified

with EBD is the lack of educational opportunities for these students; the research

literature has demonstrated that academic instruction in segregated situations can

be less effective and rigorous than what is obtained in regular education classrooms

(Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1990; Lane, Wehby, Little, & Cooley, 2005a; Stainback

& Stainback, 1990). According to the latest report to congress, the majority of

students labeled as having emotional and behavior disorders are served outside of

the regular education classroom (i.e., segregated settings) for a significant portion of

their day (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) because sometimes students with

EBD require the intense behavioral and social supports that self-contained settings

are better able to provide (Kauffman, Bantz, & McCullough, 2002).

In addition, scholars who study students with EBD (e.g., Ruhl & Berlinghoff,

1990; Coleman & Vaughn, 2000) have demonstrated there is minimal research

investigating literacy instruction with students with EBD, despite the fact that many

students with EBD have difficulties with reading in addition to their emotional and

behavioral problems. Studies are needed that reveal the literacy instruction

occurring in classrooms for students with EBD as well as highlight what teachers in

these classrooms believe about literacy instruction. Students who have been identified as having emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) have unique and significant educational needs. In addition to having social/emotional difficulties, they often also have academic difficulties (Lane, Gresham, & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). Much of the past research in the special education literature, however, has dealt with behavioral interventions for students with EBD, paying less attention to problems of academic instruction (Coleman & Vaughn, 2000; Gunter, Hummel, & Venn, 1998; Lane et al., 2005a).

This study explored, in-depth, two teachers' literacy instruction with adolescents with EBD in self-contained classrooms. The teachers chosen for the study were described as effective teachers by their supervisors.

The questions this study sought to answer are:

1. What instructional activities in literacy did two middle school special education teachers use with students with emotional/behavioral disorders?

2. What were the teachers' rationales for using these activities and/or beliefs about the learning of their students?

3. What insights can the words and experiences of these two teachers provide for the field of emotional and behavior disorders?

CHAPTER TWO

Contexts

Contextualizing the Researcher

I am and have been a professional working in the public schools as a school psychologist for close to 15 years. I bring my training and experiences as a school psychologist to my research. After completing my bachelor's degree in psychology and social welfare, I went on to complete my master's degree in counseling and receive the training to become a school psychologist. Unfortunately, my education and training did not prepare me for the diversity of children and issues that I face daily in the schools. This uneasiness that I felt after several years of working in the schools left me searching for new ideas and theoretical frameworks in which to place those ideas.

Shifting paradigms. A paradigm is an overarching framework that organizes the methods and ideas of researchers (Heron & Reason, 1997). Paradigms help to clarify what we as researchers believe about the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is acquired so that we are able to increase "..our ability to reflect critically on our own research practice" (Lave, 1996, p. 150). When I entered the field of education, I followed positivist and post-positivist paradigms that categorize knowledge into bounded domains (Meacham & Buendia, 1999). Within the post-positivist paradigm, it is believed that bounded knowledge is "...imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 168). An example of attempting to apprehend knowledge includes the practice of

measuring students' intellectual capacity and skill level to reliably estimate their school achievement potential. Furthermore, I often evaluate students who have academic difficulties individually, with the assumption that their difficulties are primarily located within them and can be discovered.

After several years of experience in schools, I became influenced by the post-structuralist movement (Meacham & Buendia, 1999; Poplin, 1988). Within post-structuralism, knowledge is not bounded or easily apprehendable because it can be different depending on who is looking, where they are looking and how they are looking. Theories within this paradigm hold that there is more than one interpretation for every object or experience (Meacham & Buendia, 1999). One such theoretical perspective within this paradigm is constructivism; for constructivists, an individual constructs learning by interacting with the world. Poplin (1988) indicates that in constructivist theory, learning is not seen as additive, but as transformative.

Changing paradigms has not been easy for me, and can be even more difficult for an entire field. We can be almost unwilling to make changes in our worldview because of the overwhelming nature of change and because we are not completely aware of what we believe in the first place. The dominant culture determines what "literate" or "learning disabled" is and because most of us as educators are part of that culture we do not question the validity of those definitions (Poplin & Phillips, 1993). As I worked in the schools and read new perspectives, I slowly became aware of my own beliefs and started to question the definitions set in front of me.

My training as a school psychologist included several different theoretical frames and even more professional skills in areas of individual and group counseling, assessment, consultation around emotional and learning problems and behavioral intervention plans. However, I found that I never held any one theory as my own. After working in the school environment for several years I found myself unable to reconcile what I found in schools with the training I received. For example, I was expected to give recommendations to teachers who did not necessarily believe in the fidelity of those interventions. Also, I evaluated children who were under significant social and emotional stress with standardized assessment tools knowing that the results would be underestimates of those children's "normal" functioning. To make sense of these paradoxical situations, I went back to school and studied new theoretical perspectives including constructivism—in particular— sociocultural theory.

Sociocultural theory is within the post-structuralist paradigm and is related to the constructivist perspective. Within sociocultural theory, individuals construct new knowledge but they do that with and among other individuals. I espouse sociocultural theory as my theoretical orientation and use this theory to frame my research study. My alignment with sociocultural theory gives me new ideas about how learning occurs. I believe that learning occurs between individuals as well as within individuals. Also I believe that learning is highly influenced by the "funds of knowledge" (Moll, 1990) that learners bring to the situation. Sociocultural theory stems from the work of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky's ideas take into account the

resources students bring to situations, and highlight the social nature of learning (Vaughn & Bos, 2009). A sociocultural description of reading says that readers continually integrate their background knowledge with the present text to comprehend what they are reading. In the next section, I briefly outline three main tenets of sociocultural theory.

Sociocultural theory. According to the developmental psychologist, Vygotsky, learning is constructed between individuals through social processes (Vygotsky, 1978). This theoretical perspective is referred to as sociocultural theory. There are three tenets of sociocultural theory that have been cited as informing practice in special education (Englert & Mariage, 1996; Englert & Palincsar, 1991; Palincsar, 1993). These tenets include: knowledge is co-constructed by individuals through social interactions; meaningful and contextualized activities within instruction are necessary, and knowledge-acquisition occurs within a community of learners.

Intermental functions: knowledge is created within social sphere.
According to sociocultural theory, knowledge is co-constructed by individuals through interactions with others. Vygotsky (1978) believed that knowledge first exists on the social plane and is then transformed and internalized by the individual. Furthermore, mediational tools, such as language and more knowledgeable others, assist in the acquisition of knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) believed that all higher order mental functions in an individual (intramental functions) were first functions within the social (intermental) sphere. This

theoretical assumption is referred to as the "general genetic law of cultural development" (Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993). Palincsar (1993) described this notion by saying that an individual first experiences knowledge through social interaction and then internalizes and appropriates that knowledge into his/her own cognitive processes. In other words, interactions between human individuals not only assist an individual in learning, but are actually necessary for learning to occur. The implications of this aspect of sociocultural theory for students with social/behavioral difficulties are profound because if students are disabled socially, they are limited in what and how they can learn on a daily basis.

Vygotsky believed that more knowledgeable people are mediational tools for new learning. Through interactions around language with adults and peers, children can achieve higher levels of thinking than they can by themselves. Vygotsky (1978) referred to this level of potential development as a person's zone of proximal development and defined it as "…the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Within the zone of proximal development, with mediated interactions, cognition—including processes such as voluntary attention, logical memory, formation of concepts and development of volition—develops (Wertsch et al., 1993). An example of mediated interactions is described by Englert and Mariage (1996); while a class of students were reading and writing in groups, all students

were able to participate with the assigned writing tasks even though some of the students were not proficient in reading and writing.

Situated-content: need for meaningful content in instruction. The second theoretical tenet or assumption associated with sociocultural theory involves having meaningful or situated content in instructional practice. Contextualized content improves the quality of learning that occurs among learners. Also, that contextualization should include the students' prior knowledge. Unfortunately, too often with students with diverse needs, there is a mismatch between their experiences and what they encounter in school (Englert & Mariage, 1996).

Contextualized activities. Lave (1996) challenges assumptions that decontextualization is needed for learning to occur. In her study of formal and informal schooling in non-Western cultures, Lave (1996) found that knowledge acquired by learners is directly related to the context in which the new knowledge is embedded. She explains, "...it was not just the informal side of life that was composed of intricately context-embedded and situated activity: there is nothing else" (p. 155). Learning that is acquired in one context is remembered in that context. In order for long-lasting, life-changing learning to occur, the knowledge acquisition process must be experienced within contextualized and meaningful activity. Lave (1996) gives an example of a study of a successful chemistry program; in that program students from diverse backgrounds were successful because the students were able to "...participate intensively in chemistry as part of their collective identity-changing lives" (p. 161). In this study the teacher related

the subject matter to the lives of the individual students in her class and used the chemistry curriculum as a backdrop.

Background knowledge. An important point to be derived from this theoretical tenet is that all students/children are always learning. Children are acquiring new knowledge based on the interaction of their own background experience and the context in which new knowledge is embedded. As Poplin (1988) notes, "students do not construct facts as curriculum writers understand them; they construct new meanings from *their* old ones," (p. 403). Background knowledge plays an important role in the acquisition of new knowledge and curriculum that takes that into account will have more success with learners. In relation to students with disabilities, Poplin explains that students come to school with rich experiences and a complex array of cognitive resources.

Unfortunately, schools do not always value the knowledge that learners bring to school. Children from diverse backgrounds have had literacy experiences in their home cultures but in schools, the point of view of the curriculum and/or teacher is often the only legitimate point of view (Lave, 1996). Schools are set up with expectations about the prior experiences of children; when children (such as those from other cultures or who have had traumatic life events) have had different experiences, there is conflict and often difficulty for those children. Scribner and Cole (1973) remarked on the mismatch between schools and learners and cautioned that this mismatch has deleterious effects on learners. If schools truly want ALL learners to be successful they need to begin discovering the background

knowledge of the students and using it as a starting point for curriculum.

Knowledge acquisition occurs within a community of learners. A third

tenet of sociocultural theory is that learning occurs within a community of learners.

Both local communities as well as the broader society play a role in what and how

learning can occur. The influence of a community on the learning of individuals is

demonstrated in how literacy is defined, instructed and evaluated (Englert &

Palincsar, 1991). For instance, individuals in a classroom where literacy is viewed

as discrete skills completed by individuals in isolation will "share a common but

limited view of literacy…"(Englert & Palincsar, 1991, p. 225). In contrast, students

learn to value the opinions and backgrounds of others in classrooms where they

are given opportunities for structured social interaction regarding reading and

writing; students even feel their own backgrounds are validated in these situations

(Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006).

Furthermore, popular ideas (not to mention federal and state law) about the

causes of learning differences take root and have significant influence on how we

help, or decide not to help, individuals in school settings. For example, for students

with emotional and behavioral problems, society's view of the problem originating

and residing in the individual students influence what interventions and/or

instruction is sanctioned in public schools.

Contextualizing the Research

I begin with a definition of literacy as is conceptualized for this review; this

definition of literacy incorporates some of the ideas of sociocultural theory

described above. I then describe the population of students being discussed, students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Following these descriptions, I demonstrate how this group of students is related to other groups of students experiencing academic difficulty in the schools. I complete my discussion with some general characteristics of adolescence to highlight the unique needs of this developmental period.

I then describe the body of research literature that deals with students with EBD and literacy instruction, beginning with an overview of research up to 2002 and following with a more in-depth look at studies from 2002 until the present. I end this section with an illustrative review of research done with the group of students described as struggling readers as a point of reference for my study.

Literacy defined. Literacy is generally defined as the ability to read and write in a given language, but it has been defined specifically to be the ability to read and write as well as a "…way of thinking about the use of reading and writing in everyday life" (Moje, 2000, p. 21). Moje elaborates by saying that literacy includes other modes of representation in addition to print and that the social and political aspects of literacy should be explicit in the definition of literacy. Moje says, "…literacy is a social act; even when individuals read alone they read with social purposes…" (p. 21). She also posits that literacy may be used to make decisions about "people's worth and potential" (p. 22). The definition of literacy used presently is the ability to read and write print in a given language and the ability to understand how to use reading and writing in everyday life. Literacy abilities as I

define them involve meaning-making activities that are mediated by other individuals in the environment.

The students. My work in the schools has left me particularly interested in one group of students: adolescents identified with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), especially those students who are educated primarily in self-contained settings. My reasons for interest in this group come from a desire—more a need—to advocate for a group of students who are seldom spoken about positively and who receive less than adequate instruction (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990). Also, Lane (2004) indicates that there has been less research conducted with students with EBD at the secondary level. The next section attempts to describe who these students are. I focus on this group of students in an attempt to show how they can benefit from instructional approaches that benefit all students, while at the same time demonstrating how they are unique.

I begin my description of the students with the federal definition of the eligibility category termed: emotional disturbance. Although not all students in this study will be eligible under this category, the category's criteria describe the student factors that indicate when more restrictive educational settings are needed. After this definition, I then describe how students with EBD are similar yet different from other students identified with diverse needs. Finally, I complete this section with some general characteristics of adolescence to highlight the unique differences of this developmental period.

Students with EBD. Students with emotional/behavioral disorders have

been determined eligible for special education by a team of qualified individuals.

They have behavioral difficulties that make it difficult for them to receive their

education without special education support. The U.S. Department of Education

2006 report to Congress indicates that 0.7% of the school population has been

labeled emotionally disturbed. The federal definition of emotional disturbance is as

follows:

> The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:
> i.   An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
> ii. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
> iii. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
> iv. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
> v.   A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
> The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance (Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities, 1999).

This definition has generated considerable controversy within the field of

special education (Cheney & Sampson, 1990; Forness & Kavale, 2000). For

example, excluding children who are socially maladjusted does not have support in

the research literature (Tankersley, Landrum, & Cook, 2004). In reality, many

identified students have conduct disorder type problems, such as oppositional

behavior. Also, phrases within the definition such as "over a long period of time"

and "to a marked degree" lead to a variety of interpretations. The phrase,

"adversely affects a child's educational performance" has led to controversies about

whether students with adequate academic achievement but striking emotional or social problems should be eligible for services (Lane, Gresham, & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). In addition to issues surrounding the vagueness of the definition, it is widely believed that the number of students identified under the category of emotionally disturbed is most likely an under representation of the number of children who actually have emotional/behavioral disorders (Coleman & Webber, 2002). To avoid delving into these issues, my literature review relies on the definitions used by the authors of the cited studies to determine whether students with emotional/behavioral disorders are included in each study.

Furthermore, students with EBD are identified because of emotional and behavioral problems; however, they also tend to have significant academic difficulties (Lane et al., 2002). Several researchers over the last 20 years have documented that many students with EBD have reading skills that are significantly below their grade placement (e.g., Kauffman, Cullinan, & Epstein, 1987; Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout, & Epstein, 2004). Researchers continue to study whether one set of problems actually causes the other but what is known is that learning and behavioral problems often occur together (Coleman & Vaughn, 2000; Morgan, Farkas, Tufis, & Sperling, 2008; Ruhl & Berlinghoff, 1992).

Relationship to other groups of students. Students with EBD who have reading difficulties are also part of a group referred to in the research literature as struggling readers. Some characteristics of struggling readers are that they do not automatically monitor their comprehension or engage in strategic behavior to

restore meaning (Vaughn & Bos, 2009). Also, struggling readers often lack the knowledge about learning strategies that average achievers articulate easily (Colvin & Schlosser, 2000). Colvin and Schlosser contrast struggling readers with successful readers who are risk takers, flexible in their use of a range of strategies, and define reading as a meaning-making exercise.

Students with EBD might also be considered a subset of what educational researchers refer to as diverse learners. Diverse learners are defined by Kameenui and Carnine (1998) as "…students who, by virtue of their instructional, experiential, cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, physiological backgrounds bring different and oftentimes additional requirements to instruction and curriculum," (p.iii). Kameenui and Carnine indicate that academic failure in reading is often connected to language learning difficulties and that diverse learners do not use verbal information in working memory nor access their long term memory as much as average achievers. There is evidence in the research literature that students with emotional and behavior disorders have underlying language deficits in addition to their other academic problems (Nelson, Benner, Neill, & Stage, 2006).

Despite the many important similarities that students with EBD have with diverse learners and struggling readers it is important to study them as a distinct group. Students with EBD have social skills problems and attention/behavior problems in addition to their academic difficulties that must be addressed in the classroom (Lane et al., 2002). Furthermore, students with EBD are often grouped together in restrictive settings, i.e., self-contained classrooms. Intuitively, effective

instructional strategies used with other students with learning difficulties could also be effective with students with EBD, so knowledge of these strategies is worthwhile. However, it is important to review research done specifically with students with EBD because even with similar instructional strategies implementation might look different with this population. It is also important to consider research studies conducted in self-contained settings. Students with EBD are often educated in these settings because of the benefits of low teacher-to-student ratios for instruction with students who have unique behavioral needs (Kauffman, Bantz, & McCullough, 2002).

Issues of adolescence. Because I am specifically interested in adolescents with EBD, I will briefly describe some developmental issues pertaining to adolescents as well as knowledge from researchers about what works with struggling adolescent readers.

Adolescents come to school with much knowledge of their world, things that they can accomplish outside of school (Moje, 2000). Moje found that adolescents use multiple forms of representation (i.e., writing, drawing, reading, speaking) in their daily lives but do not always recognize how these forms can be translated into the world of school. She also found that adolescents want to have relationships with their teachers based on mutual respect and trust. Relatedly, Ivey (2000) indicates that adolescents who are struggling readers want opportunities to share reading experiences with their teachers and their classmates.

While adolescents are reported to want to engage with their teachers and

peers, they often appear to resist engaging in classroom tasks. Meek (1983) explains by saying that adolescents who are learning to read experience real distress that stems from "...an absolute conviction that they could not be successful no matter what they did" (p. 214). These characteristics also apply to adolescents who have emotional/behavioral disorders, whose problems are similar to those of other adolescents, but magnified. Students with EBD are at high risk for dropping out of school (Scanlon & Mellard, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2006) and because they have experienced failure in school, their motivation to learn is low.

One way to increase the motivation of adolescents is through social interaction. In their paper on motivation in literacy learning, Gambrell, Dromsky, and Mazzoni (2000) mention, "One of the most robust findings in the research literature is the positive effect of social interaction on learning" (p. 133). They indicate that for intermediate-grade students, having students engage in book-sharing activities and discussion groups are an important way to promote motivation and learning. Moore et al. (2000) also indicate that allowing students to express themselves through discussions around class readings can ameliorate cycles of failure for struggling adolescent readers. Moje (2000) suggests having teachers relate classroom literacy experiences to students' outside interests and activities. Ivey (2000) echoes this sentiment by saying that adolescent readers need real purposes for reading and interesting materials in order to keep them interested.

Instructional research in literacy completed with students with EBD.

Because I found comprehensive reviews of the literature done in the early 2000s, I

begin this review of the literature by generally describing the research that has been

completed with students with EBD around literacy up until 2003; I then highlight

the specific studies completed since that time that further our understanding of

literacy and students with EBD (Lane, 2004; Rivera, Al-Otaiba, & Koorland, 2006).

General review of past studies. In her chapter in the *Handbook of Research*

in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (Lane , 2004), Lane summarized the research

regarding academic instruction and tutoring interventions for students with EBD in

academic areas from 1990-2003. Lane (2004) reviewed 14 articles that targeted

reading instruction and included 128 students ranging in age from 5 to 14. Three

studies were conducted in middle schools (Lock & Fuchs, 1995; Scott & Shearer-

Lingo, 2002; Spencer, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003). Ten studies were set in

elementary schools and one study did not specify the setting level (Skinner, Cooper,

& Cole, 1997).

The literature summary by Lane (2004) reviewed four studies focused on

peer tutoring, four other studies that examined the use of specific curricular

programs and remaining six studies explored the effects of story mapping, reading

previews, listening previews and taped words. The majority of the studies were

conducted in settings other than the students' classrooms; five studies conducted

interventions in the students' classrooms. The majority of studies were also single-

case methodologies (Lane, 2004).

Lane (2004) reported that outcomes were favorable for most of the studies she reviewed, producing positive changes on the academic variables selected as outcome measures. In the peer tutoring studies, outcomes included increases in sight word identification, letter-sound naming, blending and improved chapter quiz scores. For example, Falk & Wehby (2001) conducted a study using peer tutors within a program called Kindergarten-Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (K-PALS) with six kindergarten students in a self-contained educational setting. The students were described as having behavioral disorders. Through the use of peer tutors three times a week for 11 weeks, the students improved in the phonemic awareness skill of sound blending; they also improved in their letter-sound identification skills. However, the K-PALS program had teacher-directed segments that could have affected the results as much or more than the peer-tutoring segments.

Four studies that Lane (2004) reviewed examined specific curricular programs for phonics and phonological skills and a study that used two different curricula for repeated readings (Lane, 1999; Lane, O'Shaughnessy, Lambros, Gresham, & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2001; Lane, Wehby, Menzies, Gergg, Doukas, & Munton, 2002; Scott & Shearer-Lingo, 2002). Three of these curricular studies resulted in both improved early literacy skills as well as improved social outcomes for the students; one study did not have strong effects (Lane, 1999).

Lane (2004) reviewed one somewhat unique study by Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes (2000) that used story mapping instruction with four intermediate grade students who have behavioral disorders. All participants read several grade levels

below their grade placements. The intervention assisting the participants in mapping the main character, setting, problem, story outcome and major events of stories onto worksheets. Results indicated that the story mapping intervention improved the reading comprehension of all participants (Babyak, et al., 2000).

The remaining studies reviewed by Lane (2004) examined the effects of interventions involving reading previews using a computer model (Dawson, Venn, & Gunter, 2000), listening previews by teacher model (Skinner, Cooper, & Cole, 1997) and listening to fast and slow taped words (Skinner, Johnson, Larkin, Lessley, & Glowacki,1995) for improving reading fluency and accuracy. These studies, on the whole, produced increased reading accuracy and fluency.

Lane (2004) expressed caution with interpreting the above results because although they produced positive outcomes on the skills monitored, she stated that limitations include that most studies were conducted outside of the classroom context, there was narrow content scope—most studies investigated sight words or phonetic skills, and there is limited replication of results. She ended by recommending more studies that report the accuracy of intervention implementation and generalization across settings, persons and responses.

Rivera, Al-Otaiba, and Koorland (2006) also completed a literature review regarding reading interventions with students with EBD; they reviewed five studies completed since 1990 and one prior to that. There was only one study that was not included in Lane's (2004) literature review (Wehby, Falk, Barton-Arwood, Lane, & Cooley, 2003). The study by Wehby et al. (2003) used peer tutoring with eight

students aged 7-10; moderate improvements in sound naming, blending and nonsense word decoding were reported.

   Review of specific studies completed since 2003. I located six research articles that studied reading interventions with students with EBD as the participants since 2003; these studies were completed at both the elementary and secondary level*s*. A study by Hale, Skinner, Winn, Allin and Molloy (2005) was initially included but upon inspection involved using an accommodation for comprehending text and did not intervene with actual reading comprehension skills. The studies reviewed here include four categories of interventions: peer tutoring, direct instruction, repeated readings, and a specific curricular program. At the end of this section, I highlight a study that looked at the perceptions of teachers of students who are EBD; this study is particularly important for my study since I explore two teachers' beliefs and practices in-depth.

   Peer tutoring. Two of the studies I located used peer tutoring interventions with students with EBD (Barton-Arwood, Wehby, & Falk, 2005; Sutherland & Snyder, 2007). I review the first study, Barton-Arwood et al., (2005) in the next section because they included peer tutoring/mediation with direct instruction.

   Sutherland and Snyder (2007) investigated peer assisted learning strategies (PALS) with four middle students in a self-contained classroom; the students were in grades 5-7. The study used a multi-baseline design in which the students not involved in the intervention worked on language arts worksheets. The peer mediation dyads were chosen by the investigators to match the students with

similar reading levels instead of random selection (Sutherland & Snyder). The intervention session lasted approximately 20 minutes per session; the number of sessions varied between 20 and 30 by participant. Each intervention session consisted of partner reading, error correction procedures and self-graphing of their words read correctly at the end of the session. Results indicated improvements in reading fluency during the time the intervention was conducted and increased engagement during the intervention; some inconsistent results with decreasing disruptive behavior was reported. Treatment fidelity was reported and was somewhat inconsistent.

Direct instruction. In several textbooks for the training of special educators, direct instruction is mentioned as a strategy for use with students with special needs (Algozzine, Ysseldyke & Elliott, 1998; Lane, et al., 2002). Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui (1997) describe direct instruction as instruction in which students have high levels of engagement in classrooms that focus on academics through sequenced and structured materials directed by the teacher. During direct instruction, teachers interact closely with students creating many opportunities for correct student responses and a high level of positive reinforcement.

I found three studies that included an intervention involving direct instruction (Barton-Arwood, et al., 2005; Lingo, Slaton, & Jolivette, 2006; Strong, Wehby, Falk, & Lane, 2004). In their study, Barton-Arwood et al. (2005) examined the Horizons program, a direct instruction program that targets word attack skills, letter knowledge, and sentence writing, with six third graders who were identified

as having emotional and behavior disorders; the intervention was conducted four days a week for 30 minutes in a self-contained public school for students with EBD. Barton-Arwood et al. supplemented the Horizons (Engelmann, Engelmann, & Davis, 1997) program with modified peer assisted learning strategies (PALS); during this supplemental intervention, students met in dyads to read together, taking turns being coach and reader three days a week for 30 minutes. The modified procedures included having an adult present for modeling and "supervision" (Barton-Arwood et al., p. 11). Barton-Arwood et al. reported improved blending skills associated with their study and some improvements for decoding and word attack; there were only limited gains in reading fluency and inconclusive results for social behavior. The authors reported that maintaining student engagement and motivation were important components of an intervention; they also reported treatment fidelity.

In their study, Lingo et al., (2006), investigated the Corrective Reading program (Engelmann et al., 1999) with seven middle school students identified as having emotional and behavior disorders; the students were in sixth and seventh grades. The intervention consisted of 45 minute sessions daily for three months; in keeping with direct instruction, the intervention included consistent presentation techniques and scripted lessons. The intervention progresses from basic word attack skills to more difficult sound combinations and words and then the skills are applied to increasingly complex reading passages (Lingo et al.). The authors report positive results on the dependent variables of oral reading fluency and accuracy but indicate that the students' social behavior remained unchanged.

Strong, Wehby, Falk and Lane (2004) also conducted a study that involved Corrective Reading for 30-40 minutes, four days each week with six seventh and eighth grades students identified with EBD. The intervention involved scripted lessons in word attack skills, group reading and workbook activities. The authors also included a repeated readings portion to their study in which a research assistant had students read and reread passages from text for 20-30 minutes, four days each week. The authors reported results in which moderate growth was obtained in oral reading fluency during the implementation of Corrective Reading (Strong et al.,); treatment integrity was checked during the study.

Repeated readings. A study completed by Staubitz, Cartledge, Yurick, and Lo (2005) investigated using the strategy of repeated readings by dyads of fourth and fifth grade students with EBD. Intervention sessions consisted of reading with either another student or the experimenter and then repeating the reading of the passage for ten minutes; the sessions occurred both in and outside of the students' resource classroom. Multiple baseline design was used and students who did not participate in the intervention engaged in sustained silent reading. Results indicate that reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension were improved compared to the sustained silent reading condition. Limitations included the fact that conclusions could not be drawn for the peer mediation portion of the intervention because the experimenter acted as the mediator in over 50% of the trials. Also, treatment fidelity was not reported; the study does not indicate whether the improvements were sustained after the intervention was withdrawn.

Comprehensive reading curriculum. Wehby, Lane and Falk (2005) investigated the benefits of a specific curricular program with four kindergarten students identified with EBD; the students were 5 and 6 years old and were in a full-time special education program. The reading curriculum, Scott-Foresman (Foresman, 2000) was actually Phase I of the study; the students received the reading instruction in a regular kindergarten classroom with 22 regular education students for 75 minutes four days a week. The reading curriculum consisted of four different daily sessions in which all students participated: phonemic/phonic awareness, reading comprehension, oral language, writing and grammar. Phase II of the research study consisted of University-trained research assistants providing Phonological Awareness Training for Reading (PATR, Torgeson & Bryant, 1994) in 20 minute lessons four days each week (Wehby et al., 2005). Treatment integrity was checked by the researchers and all sessions of the curriculum and the PATR were taught daily. Results reported indicate that students with EBD showed moderate improvements in early reading performance although the degree of response varied by the individual. One surprising result noted by the authors was that the actual reading curriculum did not yield the bulk of the outcomes; most of the improvements in skills were noted by the researchers after the PATR phase was begun (Wehby et al.). PATR seemed to affect the students' letter naming and nonsense word fluency skills.

Teachers' opinions. The preceding studies have studied the effectiveness of specific approaches but they have not elucidated what types of literacy instruction

are typically occurring with students with EBD in special education programs. To investigate literacy instruction, Coleman and Vaughn (2000) conducted a focus group of teachers of students with EBD. The focus group was comprised of eight teachers who taught reading to elementary school students with EBD at least sixty minutes per day. The teachers in the Coleman and Vaughn study indicated that keeping the students engaged with academic tasks was a concern. Furthermore, the teachers discussed two instructional practices that seemed to be effective for them: cross-age tutoring and real-world applications of reading and writing tasks. The teachers felt the need for high quality reading materials but found their textbooks and basals to be lacking in this regard.

Summary. The research literature regarding students with EBD and literacy instruction indicates that students can improve in their decoding skills and to a lesser extent, comprehension, through the use of peer and cross-age tutoring. Other strategies that have been studied with students with EBD are direct instruction and repeated readings. These both demonstrate improvements in reading fluency with direct instruction having stronger outcomes after withdrawal of the intervention. Specific curricular programs have been used for remediation or skill development of phonological and phonemic areas; these studies have positive outcomes in development of early literacy skills, such as letter knowledge, phonemic segmentation and blending. Within the area of comprehension instruction for students with EBD, especially secondary students, research is lacking.

Most studies reviewed above were completed with elementary age students;

six of the 21 studies discussed above were completed at the middle school level and no studies were completed at the high school level. Of the six studies completed at middle schools, three involved peer tutoring and two involved direct instruction. The direct instruction interventions produced the most lasting results in academic outcomes such as reading fluency at the middle school level.

Lending support to the findings above that peer tutoring is an effective strategy to use with students with EBD is the finding that the teachers in the Coleman and Vaughn (2000) study use cross-age tutoring in their classrooms. Furthermore, the teachers voiced concerns that it is necessary to keep students engaged and provide real-world applications of reading. Empirical studies around these very ideas are found in research with struggling readers, specifically with students with learning disabilities.

Illustrative Review of Literacy Instruction Research with Struggling Readers. Because the research around struggling readers is vast and detailed, I will not attempt to review it comprehensively here; however, I would like to touch on a few generalities that are known about teaching struggling readers to read. I will follow with an illustrative description of several studies involving literature-based instruction with students with learning disabilities that I believe could inform the field of emotional/behavioral disorders.

General findings of research with struggling readers. In a limited review of the literature on struggling readers two main themes became evident. First, struggling readers need explicit instruction in both strategies (i.e., word attack

skills, comprehension strategies) and content (i.e., background knowledge,

vocabulary) in reading (Kameenui & Carnine, 1998). Secondly, struggling readers

need to read, as much as possible, and read material in which they have a high rate

of accuracy (Ivey, 2000; Allington, 1998). Also, phonic decoding skills are necessary

to be able to progress in accuracy and fluency of reading (Kameenui & Carnine,

1998; Lewkowicz, 2000).

In their meta-analysis of effective academic interventions with students with

learning disabilities, Swanson and Hoskyn (1998) found that a combination of

direct instruction and strategy instruction were most effective in remediating

learning disabilities. Furthermore, their study found the highest effect sizes in

reading comprehension and vocabulary interventions. They noted that those

interventions that were the most effective were also considered effective

instructional practices in the general education literature. Their findings clearly

state that students with learning disabilities can improve in their reading abilities.

Literature-based instruction. In several studies with students identified

with learning disabilities, it was demonstrated that students who have meaningful

discussions with their peers around authentic reading and writing, with support

from their teacher, make considerable academic progress (Englert, & Mariage,

1996; Englert & Rozendal, 1996; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995). In these studies

the teachers spent much time and effort ensuring that each student participated in

classroom discussions. Furthermore, the teachers provided support through

modeling and verbal interaction with each student within their zone of proximal

development. Zone of proximal development (ZPD) is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as "…the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The students in these studies were able to work at reading and writing at a level that was just beyond what they could accomplish alone because of the support of teacher and peers. These effectively mediated social interactions were instrumental in the academic success of the students involved in the above studies.

Focus of Study

My review of the research completed with students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) indicates that cross-age tutoring and direct instruction are useful practices to use with these students, especially for affecting skill development. There were no studies indicated in the above review that used meaningful content, including authentic literature, with students with EBD, although teachers in the Coleman and Vaughn (2000) study indicated a need for meaningful content in their classrooms and the research with struggling adolescent readers indicated that meaningful content can improve motivation to learn and academic achievement. More investigation into how meaningful content is utilized in these classrooms is needed. Furthermore, because of the limited number of studies that look at instruction with adolescents, more research is needed in this context specifically.

Lane et al. (2002) state that it continues to be a challenge to find effective ways to incorporate the most current research with students with EBD into school practices. More studies that reveal what occurs in classrooms of students with EBD could help because, as stated by Alvermann and Moore (1996), "Understanding existing instructional conditions enables one to suggest practices that are compatible and stand a chance of being successful" (p. 964). One step toward understanding existing instructional conditions is to reveal existing situations. Sabornie (1994) in his chapter regarding qualitative research and the field of EBD, stated, that qualitative research in the field of EBD has been concerned with "...rich descriptions of individuals...and meticulous examinations of the social contexts" (p. 567).

A study that investigates the views and practices of secondary teachers of students with EBD in a naturalistic manner would further shed light on the day-to-day instructional challenges teachers of students with EBD face. My study attempts to contribute to our understanding of literacy instruction of students with EBD by examining the social contexts of two middle school teachers of students with emotional and behavior disorders in self-contained classes.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

For my dissertation study, I investigated, in depth, the literacy practices of

two special education teachers. The teachers worked in self-contained special

education classrooms with students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).

Because I wanted to discover what literacy activities and approaches these teachers

use and their rationale for why they use those activities, I observed the special

education teachers within the context of their literacy instruction for approximately

three months.

Research Design

I addressed my research questions using a qualitative multiple case-study

design (Stake, 2005) because I wanted to explore both how these two teachers

described and demonstrated their literacy instruction. While I explored each

teacher individually as a case, I wanted to hear the teachers' own voices tell the

story of literacy instruction (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Naumes & Naumes, 1999) for

middle school students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Participants and Settings

The primary participants of the present study were two middle school

teachers in a local school district. The school district was a large urban/rural school

district located in a medium-sized city in a western state of the United States.

I began my selection of the participants by asking school district principals

and school psychologists from area middle schools for names of middle school

teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders who used effective

instructional practices in literacy. From this list of teachers, I chose four teachers for

initial observations; I then chose two teachers to include in my study. Because of my

biases that social interaction between students and between staff and students are

instrumental during literacy instruction, I approached the two teachers who

demonstrated the most use of social interaction during their literacy activities for

more in-depth study (Bogden & Biklen, 2003).

     The first teacher I chose as a participant was Ms. Murphy (all names of

people and places throughout this paper are pseudonyms); Ms. Murphy had a

Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education (grades kindergarten through

twelfth grade) and Elementary Education (grades kindergarten through eighth

grade). Ms. Murphy held a State License in Special Education for students with mild

to moderate disabilities and Elementary Education. At the time of data collection,

Ms. Murphy was in her third year of teaching and had spent all of those years

teaching in a self-contained special education setting. During my study, Ms. Murphy

taught at Summit Middle School, a school of 970 seventh and eighth graders and had

eight students enrolled in her English class; all of the students were boys.

     Ms. Murphy's classroom was located in a mobile unit located behind the

regular school building; it had a metal ramp and steps up to the door. The front of

the classroom faced north and the door was located in the southeast corner. Ms.

Murphy's classroom contained traditional furniture of desks, bookcases and tables.

The desks were organized into two rows of desks facing the front of the room; one

row had three desks and the other had two desks. A large round table with chairs was located behind the two rows of desks. A student desk was located by itself in the northwest corner of the classroom. The classroom also contained a whiteboard that ran along the front wall of the classroom with a rectangular table underneath it. A podium sat in the center of the room in front of the whiteboard. A bank of computers ran along the east wall of the classroom above which was a Word Wall arranged alphabetically; there was also a small book/magazine rack next to the computers. A bulletin board with the Galaxy and solar system on it was on a bulletin board on the west wall of the classroom. A large teacher desk was located in the northwest corner of the classroom.

The second teacher chosen as a participant was Ms. Bennett; Ms. Bennett also had a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education (grades kindergarten through twelfth grade) and Elementary Education (grades kindergarten through eighth grade). Ms. Bennett held a State License in special education for students with mild to moderate disabilities as well as a license in Elementary Education. At the time of data collection, Ms. Bennett was in her sixth year of teaching special education. Ms. Bennett taught at Fair Oaks Middle School, a school of approximately 850 students in the seventh and eighth grade and had ten students enrolled in her English class. Of the ten students enrolled in English, only one was a girl.

Ms. Bennett's classroom was located downstairs in the basement of the school building near the weights room. Ms. Bennett's classroom was created from open space by the construction of temporary walls. The room was used as a special

education classroom because of the relatively low number of students assigned to Ms. Bennett's class compared to other classes in the school; the other classrooms in the building were needed for the bigger classes.

During my observations in Ms. Bennett's classroom, I often heard the loud clang of the students in the weights class next door resetting the weights throughout the class period. Furthermore, the unique basement setting was fully experienced the day all of us, Ms. Bennett, her aide, the students and myself, as well as the weights class next door, were escorted upstairs by the school principal because of a raw sewage leak in the basement; the remainder of the day's classes were held in the cafeteria.

Ms. Bennett's classroom contained traditional classroom furniture including a white board, bookcase, teachers' desks and student desks. There was also a bank of three computers on desks along the east side of the room. Ms. Bennett's desk was located in the southeast corner of the room next to a large white board; Ms. Bennett's aide, Ms. Morgan, had a desk located next to the bank of computers in the northeast corner of the room. Seven of the nine student desks in the classroom faced the white board; on the floor around each student desk was tape that outlined the boundaries of the desks. One other student desk was located in the southwest corner of the room underneath the blackboard, facing the wall; the last student desk was located by itself directly in front of Ms. Morgan's desk. When I observed in the classroom, I sat in an empty student desk, usually next to Ms. Morgan's desk; I used my laptop to take notes. The classroom door was located on the west wall near the

southwest corner of the room; directly next to the door in the corner was a chalkboard.

In addition to traditional classroom furniture, Ms. Bennett had a *relaxation corner* in the northwest corner of the classroom that included floor pillows and a beanbag for students to sit and read and/or take time out from the rest of class; above the relaxation area, on the west wall, was a large light blue painting representing the sky that included several large fluffy white clouds. This relaxation area was partially separated from the rest of the classroom with a small bookshelf and TV stand.

Data Sources and Gathering Procedures

The following data were collected over a three month time period. I conducted nine observations in each of the two teachers' classrooms, two interviews with each teacher, and collection of artifacts during the observations.

Observations. I completed nine participant observations in each of the two participant classrooms during the English class periods. I determined the observation times by asking each teacher which class period during the day students engaged in the most reading/writing activities and scheduled my observations within that class period for each of the classes. Both teachers chose their English classes because their reading classes consisted mostly of the students having independent reading time.

My level of participation during the observations was at the observation end of the participant-observation continuum described by Glesne (2006). I observed

what occurred and took notes using a laptop computer. I began these notes in each classroom by describing the classroom environment, including the organization of instructional materials and furniture as well as where the students were seated in the room.

Following the description of the environment and for each subsequent observation, I typed the class participants' actions noting the time periodically during each observation period. When noting the literacy activities observed, I indicated who participated in the activity, what reading materials were used, how much individual and/or group reading occurred and what writing activities occurred. I also took notes of any social interactions that occurred and who was involved (Bogden & Biklen, 2003).

In addition to the descriptive notes above, I also made reflective notes to myself during the observations and often right after the observations to comment on what I had written and clarify any ambiguous notes. I also recorded my impressions of what was going on between different individuals and how the students responded to different instructional activities (Bogden & Biklen, 2003).

Teacher interviews. In addition to the observation data, I also conducted two interviews with each teacher. I regarded these interviews as crucial data sources because of my quest to hear the actual voices of my participants (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Naumes & Naumes, 1999). I framed the interview questions by reviewing my observation data while keeping my research questions in mind. The first interview with each teacher was completed after three observations in each of

the participant classrooms so that the teachers were familiar with me at the time of

the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). During these initial interviews, I asked about

the pedagogical ideas of the teachers during their literacy instruction. The second

interview occurred after most of the observations were complete in each participant

class. All of the interviews were semi-structured because I used formal questions as

a guide but did not limit the participants' responses (Bogden & Biklen, 2003). I

audio taped and transcribed the interviews for the analysis process.

Artifacts. At the end of each observation, I asked the teacher for copies of the

assignments given to the students during the observed class period. A couple of

times, I did collect copies of worksheets students had worked on. However, most of

the time there were not many artifacts collected from the two classrooms because

much the students were working on big projects or teacher-led discussions. In these

instances, I took notes of the teacher lesson plans or merely copied the assignments

from the board into my notes. I viewed the student assignment information as

supportive data to provide a point of reference for some of the observation data.

Analysis Procedures

I engaged in data analysis throughout my study, conducting rudimentary

coding during the observation and interview process and continuing with more

specific coding after most of the observations and interviews were completed.

Because this is a multi-case study, I read through the data, completing initial coding,

of each participant teacher (case) separately throughout data collection leaving

comparisons between cases as the final step of analysis.

Data analysis consisted of qualitative analysis procedures similar to those described by Glaser (1978) involving detailed, systematic, analysis involving daily readings and note-taking on the data collection process. Throughout the data collection period, I scanned my observation and interview transcripts, completing multiple readings of them to discern the teachers' instructional beliefs and practices, constantly theorizing about how the data were categorically connected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

I began my analysis of the data by looking in-depth at the first three observation transcripts for each classroom noting similar activities and/or classroom routines used by the teachers (Glesne, 2006). My first coded themes were the literacy activities I observed in each class; I defined activities to be actions in which the students and teachers were engaged related to reading and/or writing during each class period. The information I noted during this initial coding process regarding instructional activities was also used to guide my interviews with the two teachers (Stake, 2005).

As I studied the observation notes again after the first interviews with the teachers, I noted general themes regarding the participation structures each teacher used during instruction. I began to categorize bits of data into the participation structure each fit. I noted the social interaction patterns that occurred dates as well as the types of activities chosen during each observation and then looked for similarities and differences as they related to my general theme of participation structure. I then cross-referenced these findings regarding the observation data and

participation structures with the bits of data and analytic notes from my interview data. There were enough similarities through this analysis of participation structures to organize the presentation of my results.

I then engaged in a rereading of my observation notes and interview transcripts and compared the theme of participation structures with notes I had written previously regarding the teachers' beliefs as indicated in my interviews with them (Glesne, 2006). What I noticed was that although both teachers indicated beliefs regarding instruction that involved modeling and guided practice, these instructional practices were not evident within their instruction. There was therefore incongruence between what the teachers believed regarding instruction and what they did during instruction. This led me to present the teacher beliefs separately from the instructional practices in my results section. I then carefully interpreted the instructional practices I observed through the sociocultural lens (Vygotsky, 1978).

The assignment artifacts were incorporated into the analysis coding after the coding themes were more solidified as an opportunity to validate those themes that were categorized from the observation and interview data (Glesne, 2006). For instance, after determining that Ms. Bennett used very little social interaction as part of her instruction, I validated that conclusion by looking at the worksheets used during those class periods.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The purpose of the present study was to explore the beliefs and instructional practices in literacy (reading and writing) of two middle school special education teachers with students with emotional/behavioral difficulties. I organize this results section by first presenting my findings for Ms. Murphy; I then present the findings for Ms. Bennett. I begin each teacher's part with a description of her beliefs through her own words. I then follow the first section on beliefs by illustrating the instructional practices of each teacher; I found that each teacher's practices could be grouped by the types of participation structures she used.

The instructional practices sections for each teacher begin with a description of the amount of time (in minutes) each participation structure was used per observation session and the general activities assigned during each observation. For Ms. Murphy, there are sub-sections on two participation structures: whole-class instruction and individualized instruction; for Ms. Bennett, there are sub-sections on three participation structures: whole-class instruction, individualized instruction, and small-group instruction. The sub-sections on participation structures are organized by first presenting my observation data through one or two vignettes; the vignettes are meant to portray a real sense of the interactions and activities occurring at the time of the observation. I follow each vignette with an interpretation of the data using sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). I end each teacher's section with a summary of how her instructional beliefs and practices

compare to one another.

Ms. Murphy

This section illustrates the major themes or findings I discovered through analyzing the data from Ms. Murphy's classroom. I begin by describing Ms. Murphy's beliefs regarding teaching in a self-contained program and teaching literacy. I follow the section on beliefs with a section describing Ms. Murphy's literacy instructional practices including both the activities and participation structures she used. Because of my theoretical bias regarding the need for social interaction and meaningful activities during instruction, I highlight Ms. Murphy's use of mediated social interactions within each of the participation structures.

Ms. Murphy's beliefs regarding literacy instruction. This section highlights Ms. Murphy's beliefs regarding instruction in a self-contained program generally and her beliefs regarding literacy instruction. During our first interview, Ms. Murphy described her philosophy regarding teaching a self-contained program for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. She said,

> My philosophy goes against most traditional philosophies that holds (sic) that in a behavioral program, it's not academic. You're not dealing with academics; you're dealing with behaviors of students. Which I'll accept that true, I do have to deal…with their behaviors…but…I push the academics. So, I try to structure an academic program that keeps them busy to reduce their behaviors and the interferences of the behavior (Interview, March 25, 2003).

In the above quote, Ms. Murphy indicated that her program was different than "traditional philosophies" because she believed self-contained programs typically focused on student behaviors. She felt that she needed to manage her

students' behavioral issues within the context of an academic program. She reiterated this point when she said, "I want to come up with the best academic program that I have—for reading and writing, and support their behaviors through whatever it is that I'm trying to do" (Interview, March 25, 2003).

Ms. Murphy went on to describe the structure of her program during our second interview when she told me how she divided her program's daily schedule into a class for "specific English [skill] where we address the spelling, the vocabulary, the grammar, that kind of mechanics stuff," a class where "…we do specific writing technique, the written word…the whole writing process thing," (Interview, May 8, 2003) and a "reading class…to read and then to talk about the guided reading process". Ms. Murphy also mentioned that she dedicated "…part of the period for reading class to silent reading and then I read to them," (Interview, March 25, 2003). To paraphrase Ms. Murphy's description, she allocated three class periods of her program, each day, to language arts: a reading class, a writing process class, and a writing mechanics class; I observed in the writing process class each week because it would give me the best opportunity to observe social interactions between students and teacher. Also, during the second interview, I asked Ms. Murphy about her philosophy regarding teaching reading and writing; she responded that she believed reading and writing should be taught together. Her response follows:

> I definitely, definitely believe that reading and writing go hand in hand, that you don't isolate, you can't separate the two. And oral language leads right to the writing, kind of thing. I do think that your better readers are better writers and I do see a correlation in this class. My higher readers

are much better writers… (Interview, May 8, 2003).

In the response above, Ms. Murphy asserted that reading and writing instruction are implicitly connected and that oral language needs to be included as well, but her response didn't clearly answer the question of how she believed literacy instruction should occur.

As I describe in the next section, Ms. Murphy's class was involved in a book-making project for much of the time I observed. As Ms. Murphy talked about this project during our interview, she alluded to her beliefs about literacy instruction,

> …it's a guided practice. I know how to write; as long as I'm showing them the decision-making processes and what we have to consider as far as the writing at least they're seeing what goes into writing and they're starting to be less frustrated with the idea of a draft (Interview, March 25, 2003).

Ms. Murphy described her instruction in her writing process class as guided practice and as similar to "…the *Writers Workshop* process of re-reading and editing and knowing where the direction was going organizational-wise (sic)" (Interview, May 8, 2003). Both guided practice writing instruction and *Writers Workshop* align with the tenets of sociocultural theory because of their use of scaffolding within a community of learners. In the next section I demonstrate Ms. Murphy's literacy instructional practices through vignettes from her writing process class during the book-making project.

Ms. Murphy's instructional practices in literacy. During the preliminary analysis of my observation data from Ms. Murphy's classroom, I looked at the nature of the social interactions between Ms. Murphy, her aide and the students within

each class session. From this analysis, I found that Ms. Murphy used two different

teacher-student participation structures during literacy instruction. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Minutes spent in different participation structures in Ms. Murphy's class, per observation									
Participation structures observed in Ms. Murphy's classroom	2/10	2/18	2/25	3/11	3/18	3/25	4/8	4/15	5/12
Whole-class instruction	40	60	60	35	40	0	0	30	0
Individualized instruction	5	0	0	0	0	40	55	25	45

As seen in Figure 1, across my nine observations, Ms. Murphy provided

instruction to the whole class during six class periods (e.g., 2/10, 2/18, 2/25, 3/11,

3/18 and 4/15). Ms. Murphy utilized individualized instruction with independent

seatwork during four class periods (e.g., 3/25, 4/8, 4/15 and 5/12). Figure 1

demonstrates the actual minutes each participation structure was used. Notice in

Figure 1 that Ms. Murphy used whole-class instruction for the majority of the

observation sessions (six and ½ out of nine observations), and the majority of the

time within those observations (61% of the time or 265/435 minutes). Ms. Murphy

used individualized instruction for the remainder of time I observed (39% of the

time or 170/435 minutes).

Also, as part of my preliminary analysis of the observation data, I noted the activities in which Ms. Murphy, her aide and the students engaged during each class session; those activities are listed below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Activity used during each class session in Ms. Murphy's class									
	2/10	2/18	2/25	3/11	3/18	3/25	4/8	4/15	5/12
Activity	Elements of Story: *Little Red Hen*	Comparing Two Common Fairytales: Venn Diagram	Beginning of Book Project	Book Project: writing	Book Project: writing	Book Project: editing	Book Project: product-ion	Book Project: end of production	Writing Original Fairytales

From Figure 2, you can see that Ms. Murphy consistently worked on the writing process during each of my observations. Also, for the majority of the weeks I observed in Ms. Murphy's classroom, the class worked on a book-making project. Ms. Murphy described the rationale behind the project briefly during my first interview with her.

> I have a background, where, my brother does pop-up books, so he's into the whole production concept of making books…in past experience, I've had classes that have really gotten into doing like the pop-up books, and producing simple literature books, 'cause they like making stuff to have, (Interview, March 25, 2003).

In the sub-sections below, I describe Ms. Murphy's instructional practices through vignettes illustrating the social interaction that occurred within the participation structures of whole-class instruction and individualized instruction; both sub-sections demonstrate parts of a book-making process. The chosen class sessions included the greatest amount of social interaction for that participation structure. In keeping with my sociocultural theoretical framework (Vygotsky, 1978),

I interpret the data in light of Ms. Murphy's use of both mediated social interaction after each vignette.

    Whole-class instruction. In this sub-section on Ms. Murphy's instruction during the participation structure of whole-class instruction, I begin with a description of the book-making project and an explanation of some features of the story—a satirical fairytale loosely based on the students' school. I then present a vignette and interpretation of the class session on February 25, the second day of the Book Project; I end with a vignette and interpretation of the class session on March 18, the last day the class was actually writing the story. I chose these two vignettes because they were representative of what occurred at these two different points during the book-making project.

    Description of book project. Ms. Murphy began the book-making project on February 25, 2003, the day before my third observation. Ms. Murphy had the class decide on the process for writing their fairytale together; they decided to vote on both the story ideas as well as the sentence structure. Ms. Murphy took notes on the board at the front of the room so all the students could write each day's writing in their writer's workshop notebooks. In addition, one student, Mathew, would be the illustrator for the book. Ms. Murphy described her reasoning behind choosing Mathew as the illustrator in our second interview, "…he doesn't like to write. So, this was a deal that we made: that if you're our illustrator and you follow our production notes, then we'll take care of [the writing]" (Interview, May 8, 2003).

Before beginning the story, the students decided some of the key elements of their story, including characters, setting and plot ideas. The students decided the title of their fairytale by secret ballot; the title they chose was: *The Legend of the Summit Middle School South Hall Troll.* Ms. Murphy kept the notes from the remainder of their discussion on the white-board and when I arrived in class on February 25, I transcribed them into my observation notes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Notes from board on 2/25/03

Fairytale Elements	Main character: Troll (Mr. Shenkles
	King (Principal Porter) banished the troll to another kingdom
	Sir Harris is the Silver Knight
	Mystic Watering Hole is the South Hall water fountain
	Magical pass is produced by elves (students)
	Magical Enlightment Period: class time

As seen in Figure 3, the class decided that the main character for their fairytale was The Troll who was a parody of one of the teachers at their school, Mr. Shenkles. The school principal was represented in their story by the character of the King and the vice principal was Sir Harris, the Silver Knight. The school's students were represented in the story as elves. A major plot component involved the King banishing the troll to another kingdom (the South hall of the school). Figure 1 also

explains key vocabulary from the book: *Mystic Watering Hole* was the water fountain in South Hall; *Magical Pass* represented the hall passes students needed to travel in the halls and the *Magical Enlightened Period* was class-time.

  Vignette 1. I entered Ms. Murphy's classroom on February 25 at 1:21pm as English period began; there were four students present in class: Mathew, Michael, Keith and Carl. Ms. Murphy began class by saying to her students, "You need to have your writer's workshop notebooks out," (Observation notes, 2/25). Ms. Murphy then asked Keith to "catch Carl up" (Observation notes) because he had been absent during the previous class period when several story details had been decided. Ms. Murphy then announced to the class that they were going to continue writing their fairytale; she told them that the class would be "collaborating [and] publishing" (Observation notes) the fairytale. She then explained that by the end of the project, they would put the parts of the books "… together and have a book for each of us," (Observation notes); she added that she would finance the project.

  At 1:45p.m., Ms. Murphy asked the class, "How do we describe the setting?" (Observation notes, 2/25); to which two students called out ideas. Ms. Murphy highlighted one of their comments by saying, "*Enchanted*...mmm…brainstorm ideas; all ideas are good [to describe the] overall land that we're talking about" (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy and the students then spent several minutes discussing the description for the fairytale's setting (their middle school). During the discussion, Keith insulted Michael several times; Ms. Murphy reprimanded Keith for making insulting comments to Michael, but only after the third or fourth insult. The

students then wrote the beginning sentence from the board into their notebooks.

At 1:59p.m., Ms. Murphy asked the class "How are we going to describe the elves? Who else is integral to our story?" (Observation notes, 2/25). Mathew had finished the Title Page illustration during the previous discussion and at this time Keith picked it up and showed it to the other students in the class. Ms. Murphy remarked to the class, "I want you to think about parts of speech, adjectives" (Observation notes). Students generated a list of adjectives to describe the elves as Ms. Murphy wrote them on the board. Ms. Murphy then said, "We need another solid sentence; we need a sentence with descriptors. What are we going to say about our noun, the elves?" (Observation notes). Keith replied, "Good little elves", but Ms. Murphy corrected him by saying, "That isn't accurate; the choices are *noisy, little elves* or *rowdy, seventh and eighth grade elves*" (Observation notes). She limited Keith to adjectives that were already on the board. The students, with Ms. Murphy's prompting, decided to use all of the adjectives.

At 2:12p.m., Ms. Murphy asked the students, "Is this what we're going to write today? You could argue that not all elves are rowdy, noisy...what are our two problem situations?" (Observation notes, 2/25). Ms. Murphy then reminded the students that they had chose two problem situations for their fairytale during the previous class period. Ms. Murphy then engaged the students in a dialogue about whether the verb *stop* agreed grammatically with the rest of the sentence. A few minutes later, Ms. Murphy asked the students whether their sentence was too long; the students agreed with her suggestion to break the sentence into two parts. I

copied the final sentences into my observation notes (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: The beginning of The Fairytale written by Ms. Murphy's class

> Once upon a time in the South Hallway of an enchanted middle school, there lived an evil troll with big shoes who stops noisy, rowdy, [little] seventh and eighth grade elves from proceeding to their destinations…This evil troll would stop the noisy, rowdy seventh and eighth grade elves from proceeding to their destinations whenever he encountered them.

Ms. Murphy ended the period at 2:21p.m., by saying, "I want to make sure everybody has these two sentences," (Observation notes, 2/25); she then proceeded to check each student's notebook to be sure they all had the two sentences from the board down in their notebooks.

Interpretation of vignette 1. In the vignette above from February 25, there were sixteen social interactions that occurred between Ms. Murphy and her students. These social interactions included interactions regarding negative behavior, Ms. Murphy giving closed-ended directions, Ms. Murphy initiating a traditional classroom discourse pattern, and collaboration among class members regarding their story.

Two of the interactions from February 25 were related to negative behavior; these included a series of insults from Keith to Michael and the resulting reprimand from Ms. Murphy. Ms. Murphy also gave her students closed-ended directions for three of the interactions. For instance, Ms. Murphy began class by telling her students "You need to have your writer's workshop notebooks out" (Observation

notes, 2/25). Directly afterwards Ms. Murphy asked Keith to tell Carl what he had missed from the previous class period. Ms. Murphy's closed-ended directions were procedural to ensure the students were prepared for instruction.

There were also several interactions from the above vignette that were in the form of a traditional discourse pattern Cazden (2001) referred to as Initiation—Response—Evaluation (IRE). During these interactions, Ms. Murphy initiated a question, the students responded and then Ms. Murphy evaluated those responses. For example, Ms. Murphy asked her students to generate descriptors for "…our noun, the elves" (Observation notes, 2/25). Keith then responded with "Good little elves" (Observation notes, 2/25) and Ms. Murphy evaluated the response telling him, "That isn't accurate…" (Observation notes, 2/25). One of the most important tenets of sociocultural theory is that of mediated social interactions where a *more-knowledgeable-other* scaffolds new learning for students (Vygotsky, 1978). Ms. Murphy's use of the discourse pattern, IRE, discouraged her students' from engaging in extended conversations that would allow Ms. Murphy to scaffold new thinking and learning for her students. Instead, students' responses were limited to short phrases.

In addition to limiting the extent of discourse in the above example, Ms. Murphy also limited what information was *accurate* in her interaction with Keith. By telling Keith that his response was not correct, Ms. Murphy determined who and what were valid to the discussion. Cazden (2001) referred to this determination by the teacher as *speaking rights* or "the ways by which students get the right to talk—

to be legitimate speakers—during teacher-led group activities" (p. 82). Instead of telling Keith he was not correct, Ms. Murphy could have used Keith's response as an opportunity to explore his understanding of the story and scaffold his thinking regarding the class story.

In contrast to the above interactions in the IRE format, there were also interactions during the February 25 class vignette in which Ms. Murphy engaged her students in a discussion about their fairytale. For instance, Ms. Murphy asked the students how they would describe the setting for their fairytale and several students called out ideas; Ms. Murphy then told the students "…all ideas are good…" (Observation notes, 2/25). In this interaction, Ms. Murphy used an open-ended question to engage her students in discourse regarding the description of their fairytale kingdom. This led to some interaction and collaboration between the students but it also contributed to a disagreement between the students and Keith insulting Michael. Vygotsky (1978) discussed the importance of providing opportunities for dialogic interactions within a learning environment; Ms. Murphy's engagement of her students in conversation was an example of providing such an opportunity. However, from a sociocultural perspective, it is also important to scaffold and support those interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Ms. Murphy did not provide enough support in the above vignette so the students could have a productive conversation. Also, because of the lack of mediation within the discussion, the interactions became a conflict and ended with insults.

The activities of February 25, above, were similar to the three observations

on February 10, February 18, and March 11 that also included the participation

structure of whole-class instruction because in all three observations Ms. Murphy

guided the writing process of the fairytale with the class.

Vignette 2. The following vignette is from my observation in Ms. Murphy's

class three weeks later on March 18, 2003 when the class was at the end of the

group-writing portion of their book-project. The participation structure in this

vignette is also whole-class instruction; however, notice the differences between her

guidance in this vignette compared to the above February 25 vignette.

I entered Ms. Murphy's class on March 18 at 1:40p.m.; there were four

students in class: Shane, Carl, Mathew and Michael. Ms. Murphy had written

something on the board (see Figure 5):

Figure 5: Dialogue written on whiteboard in Ms. Murphy's class on 3/18/03

> Troll: Your majesty, I just want these elves out of my hall!
> King: Troll, you've overstepped your authority! Let me remind you
> that I am king here! Therefore, I hereby banish you to the outer
> regions!

Ms. Murphy began class by discussing the illustrations of the book with

Mathew. She said to him, "What you need to make notes for, Mathew, is a picture of

the knight, nothing gory", (Observation notes, 3/18). Mathew replied, "Why?"

(Observation notes). Ms. Murphy then began walking toward the front of the

classroom as she said to Mathew, "Because we just need to know what he looks

like…and then we need the king sitting on the throne…" (Observation notes).

As Ms. Murphy approached the front of the room, she pointed to the

whiteboard and said to the class, "Does everyone have this (gestures toward the board) written down? Michael, do you have what's on the board? Oh my god! Was that a no? I don't understand the waste of time." (Observation notes, 3/18). Ms. Murphy then addressed the whole group with the agenda for the class period, "We need to verify that we have the pages and the illustrations to match. Ok Carl, get yourself organized and then can you read from the title and page one?" (Observation notes). She wanted the class to read through their notes together to be sure they all had the same writing and notes for each page in their stories.

Before Carl began reading page one, Ms. Murphy noticed that Shane was looking through a bunch of papers and said, "Shane do you want to staple your stuff together? I find I stay more organized when I staple my pages together" (Observation notes, 3/18). Ms. Murphy then addressed the whole class as she said, "We have an audience" (Observation notes); she was referring to me sitting in the class with them as the audience for the read-through of their story. After a nod from Ms. Murphy, Carl read the notes and dialogue for page one; Ms. Murphy then described the illustration that would be on the first page. There were several illustrations posted in the back of the room on the bulletin board, including an illustration of the troll, a knight, and one of the elves. All of the illustrations were colored in vibrant hues.

Ms. Murphy then said, "Shane read page two" (Observation notes, 3/18). Again, Shane read the page and Ms. Murphy described the next illustration. Because Michael wasn't participating with the read-through, Ms. Murphy asked Michael if he

had everything from the board written down. She then said, "Ok, Carl, page three please" (Observation notes). After Carl finished reading page three, Ms. Murphy said, "...that's back to the narrative and away from the dialogue stuff...", because page three was primarily narrative (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy then told the class, "When we start laying [the book] out, we'll decide about the dialogue balloons...Okay, remember that was a production note..." (Observation notes). The class period continued with Carl and Shane taking turns reading pages of their finished story and Ms. Murphy asking whether there were any differences between the two students' notes.

A short while later, Carl said he had more [writing] for page seven than what Shane had read. Ms. Murphy said, "Carl, what do you have?" Carl read what he had and Ms. Murphy said, "Did you see the subtle differences?" Shane read what you have again?"(Observation notes, 3/18). After this comparison, Ms. Murphy addressed the illustrator, "Mathew, on page nine...we need an illustration of the troll grabbing the elf" (Observation notes).

Ms. Murphy then again asked Michael whether he had the story details down from page nine and said, "Okay, read what you have," (Observation notes, 3/18). Michael read what he had for page nine. Ms. Murphy asked Shane, "Do you have a discrepancy?" (Observation notes). After noting to the class that Michael's notes were different from Shane and Carl's notes, Ms. Murphy said to Michael, "I don't know if you're on the same page because you're touching things you're not supposed to be touching..." (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy then went back to the

read-through and said, "There seem to be three illustrations that we're missing" (Observation notes).

Carl then read page ten to the others but omitted a word that Ms. Murphy had in her notes. Ms. Murphy said, "We had the word 'well'. Does everyone have the word 'well'?" (Observation notes, 3/18). Carl confirmed that he did have the word but had missed reading it. Ms. Murphy then proceeded by saying, "Ok, page 11, Shane" (Observation notes). As Shane read the dialogue on page 11, Ms. Murphy asked a question about whether the illustration worked with the writing on that page. Carl, Shane and Ms. Murphy discussed whether they needed a new illustration. Upon hearing this discussion, Mathew inserted comments into the discussion from the back table, defending his pictures and ideas. At that comment, Michael began laughing at Mathew. Ms. Murphy immediately addressed Michael telling him that it was not appropriate to giggle when someone talks to him, "You do not want to give the impression of not being mentally healthy" (Observation notes). Michael appeared to dismiss her comments but Ms. Murphy said to him, "Just note that it's inappropriate to laugh" (Observation notes). She then turned to Mathew and said, "What I want you to know about this is that when we make criticisms, we aren't saying that there's anything wrong with [the illustrations]" (Observation notes).

Ms. Murphy then had Carl read page 12 aloud and Ms. Murphy disputed the wording he had in his notes; Ms. Murphy, Carl and Shane discussed the wording for a few minutes. At the end of the discussion, they all had the same wording. Ms. Murphy seemed intent on everyone having the exact same wording in each of

her/his book. Michael then read the final page and Ms. Murphy said to the students,

"Ok guys, that's the story. Is that what you all have?" (Observation notes, 3/18).

During the last few minutes of class, Ms. Murphy talked about the next phase

of their book project, a phase she called "Production" by saying:

> Production means that we have to decide what we're going to type on the computer…then I have to see about getting the copies made to make a real book. We'll talk to the cinematographers and see if it can be done. We'll invite all these people down; this is our book (Observation notes, 3/18/03).

Interpretation of vignette 2. The interactions of the above vignette are divided

into two different sets, Ms. Murphy initial discussion with one student and then the

read-through for the remainder of the class session.

Ms. Murphy began the class period on March 18 by telling Mathew, the

illustrator, what to illustrate; by telling Mathew what he should do, Ms. Murphy

limited Mathew's opportunity to gain cognitively from the illustration activity. Ms.

Murphy could have engaged Mathew in conversation to choose the details of the

illustration as it related to the story and the ensuing dialogic interaction would have

allowed higher-order thinking about the story to occur (Chang-Wells & Wells,

1993). Mathew then asked "Why?" (Observation notes, 3/18), a response that Ms.

Murphy could have used as an opportunity to scaffold Mathew's learning (Vygotsky,

1978), but instead she simply answered the question and walked away, limiting the

possibility for further social interaction. These simplified interactions between Ms.

Murphy and Mathew are reminiscent of instruction called *recitation* that has

historically occurred in schools. Instruction characterized as recitation involves rote

learning, student passivity, and most significantly "...low-level cognitive functions" (Tharp, 1993, p. 271).

Ms. Murphy directed a read-through of the class' finished fairytale for most of the remainder of the period; this read-through was in effect one extended social interaction between the three individuals who participated, Shane, Carl and Ms. Murphy. Vygotsky's (1978) description of sociocultural theory included the assertion that individuals acquire knowledge within a community of learners. Ms. Murphy's use of the read-through gave the class the opportunity to work together to construct the content of their class story, creating a community of learners. This read-through activity could have also been a mechanism for mediated social interactions within that community of learners; however, the discourse that occurred during the read-aloud did not include in-depth dialogue. It was limited to students reading text verbatim, Ms. Murphy describing the illustrations and comments regarding the wording of sentences. Furthermore, the community of learners was exclusive since two students did not participate in the read-through.

Individualized instruction. In the following section, I describe Ms. Murphy's instruction during the participation structure of individualized instruction. I present this participation structure through a vignette from the class session on March 25, 2003 during the production phase of the book-making project and follow with an interpretation of the vignette. I chose this particular vignette because it was representative of the other class sessions in which individualized instruction was used and also it provided good dialogue data between students and adults.

Vignette. I arrived in Ms. Murphy's class on 3/25/03 at 1:20p.m. There were

four students in class: Carl, Mathew, Michael and Warren. The students were all

working independently on different parts of the book-production process. Carl and

Michael typed at the computers; Mathew was at the back table working on the

illustrations and Warren worked with the instructional aide, Ms. Bird, at a desk. Ms.

Murphy was at her computer working on formatting the story so it would print; the

class had put a border around each page but the printer wouldn't print with the

border so she had to delete the border. Ms. Murphy addressed one of the students,

"Carl, are you on page seven or ten?" (Observation notes, 3/25); he replied that he

was on page thirteen. Ms. Murphy then addressed another student:

> Oh…and then Mathew, when we get this stuff printed out we can figure out
> the format as far as pictures go; which page they go on and how many copies
> I need to make. We can get this completely printed out this week
> (Observation notes, 3/25/03).

At this point, Ms. Murphy's instructional assistant, Miss Bird, left the room

with Warren to retrieve the document Ms. Murphy had sent to a printer outside the

classroom. Ms. Murphy moved over to Carl's computer and read over his shoulder.

She talked to him as he transcribed his notes into the word processing program.

> Okay, you don't have to capitalize "Evil Troll" because it's not his name…Now
> that's the world's longest sentence; don't you think we need punctuation? Do
> you want to write out the words six and nine or write the numbers?
> (Observation notes, 3/25/03).

Michael then asked a question regarding what he should be typing but Ms.

Murphy ignored him for a minute as she continued talking to Carl, "When you talk

about South Hall as a place, then you would capitalize it," (Observation notes, 3/25).

She then explained capitalization rules to Carl. Afterwards, she replied to Michael,

"Keep typing Michael" (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy continued helping Carl with

punctuation, capitalization and spacing of his writing for several more minutes. At

one point she asked in a collaborative manner, "What is going on with that

sentence?" (Observation notes).

Ms. Bird then returned to the classroom with Warren and the printed out

version of the story. Ms. Murphy addressed Warren saying, "Ok, what are you going

to do?" (Observation notes, 3/25/03). Warren did not acknowledge Ms. Murphy's

comment so she walked over to his desk to talk to him. She said to him, "For the past

week or so your behavior has caused you to not finish the story. You will not get to

make the book". Warren pleaded with her, "Can I please make the book?"

(Observation notes). Ms. Murphy interrupted him mid-sentence, said "No"

(Observation notes), and walked over to where Mathew was formatting the

illustrations on the computer. Warren proceeded to tear up his pages of the book

since he was now not making a book. At that point, Ms. Murphy told Warren that he

had wasted the entire class period thus far by doing "nothing" (Observation notes).

Warren began pacing back and forth at his desk.

Ms. Murphy went to help Carl because he had been standing and waiting for

help with saving his document. Ms. Murphy said, "Carl, all you need to do, bud, is put

your disk in the computer," (Observation notes, 3/25/03). Carl replied, "And open

it?" (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy then asked Carl to come over to her desk so

she could assist him with saving his word processing document to a floppy disk; she said to him, "Go ahead and drag all of your text…" (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy then addressed Michael who had stopped typing and was just sitting at his computer, "Michael, I don't want you taking breaks…this is something we need to do" (Observation notes). Ms. Murphy then remarked to Warren that he needed to be doing something in class; she told him to finish an assignment from the previous class. However, Warren told her that he couldn't work on that class during English class. Ms. Murphy gave him the choice to work on it or complete it for homework; he chose to do the assignment for homework. Ms. Murphy then told him that he needed to put his head down on the desk for the rest of the period.

At 1:50p.m. I noted that Ms. Murphy finished helping Carl with formatting his story and began working with Mathew to organize the illustrations. She asked Mathew whether the illustrations should be on the right or left side of the book. Mathew replied, "Aren't they usually on the right side?" (Observation notes, 3/25). Ms. Murphy then went to the book shelf at the side of the room and pulled several picture books off of the shelf to look for examples of illustration placement. After looking through several books, Ms. Murphy and Mathew decided to place the illustrations on the right side of each page. Then addressing both Mathew and Carl she said, "We can [also] do a title and a dedication page" (Observation notes). She gave Mathew and Carl an example of a dedication: "This page is dedicated to whoever [sic]; we can have individual pages like that…I need to…I have to figure out how many books we're doing" (Observation notes). As Mathew began taking down

the illustrations he had been creating over the past three weeks, Ms. Murphy

cautioned him to be careful pulling them off the board. She said, "You don't wreck

your art" (Observation notes). At her urging, Mathew handled the pictures more

carefully.

During the above discussion between Ms. Murphy, Mathew and Carl, Ms. Bird

worked with Michael and Warren; she told Warren to sit in his desk a couple of

times and redirected Michael to get to work. Upon hearing the most recent redirect,

Ms. Murphy addressed Michael by saying, "Michael, we have to get all this done, laid

out for a book this week so you need to get finished" (Observation notes, 3/25). Ms.

Murphy then told Warren to put his head down on his desk and told him "I'm sorry

you didn't get to take your medications today, but this is a waste of time,"

(Observation notes). At this comment, Warren glowered at Ms. Murphy and she

immediately told him to leave class. She said, "Leave…but don't take your binder"

(Observation notes). Warren responded by grabbing his binder and leaving the

room. As he left the room, he made angry noises and began shouting. After a few

minutes, the shouting decreased to a muffled protest; Warren remained outside the

classroom until the end of the class period ten minutes later.

The vignette above, illustrating the individualized participation structure, is

representative of the other observations that occurred using that participation

structure (e.g., 4/8, 4/15 and 5/12) because during those observations, the students

also worked on writing assignments while Ms. Murphy and her aide assisted them

individually.

Interpretation of vignette. In the vignette from March 25, 2003 above, there were 24 interactions that occurred between Ms. Murphy or her aide and the students. Many of those interactions involved mediated academic scaffolding. There were also, however, several interactions that were in response to behavior and were negative in nature. It is significant that the mediated interactions occurred with two students, Mathew and Carl and the negative behavioral interactions occurred with two other students, Michael and Warren. I will discuss these two different types of interactions separately in the next few paragraphs.

As the class period began on March 25, Ms. Murphy spoke to Carl and Mathew separately regarding their tasks for the period. She asked Carl how far he had come with his typing and then told Mathew that she and he would collaborate later regarding the formatting of his illustrations. Although not dialogic themselves, Ms. Murphy's initial interactions with Carl and Mathew set up opportunities for scaffolding and mediated social interactions later in the class (Wertsch et al., 1993).

As the period continued, Ms. Murphy demonstrated scaffolding as she assisted Carl in the conventions of writing. For instance, Ms. Murphy gave Carl feedback regarding a capitalization error and then discussed capitalization rules with him. Ms. Murphy's actions indicate that she recognized the importance of the apprenticeship model for writing instruction (Englert et al., 2006). Englert, Mariage and Dunsmore (2006) described the *apprenticeship arrangement* as a balance of modeling writing conventions and explicit instruction with allowing students to take increasing levels of participation in the writing process.

Ms. Murphy continued to apprentice Carl as they looked over his paper together making grammar corrections when she asked him, "What is going on with that sentence?" (Observation notes, 3/25). Later in the period, Ms. Murphy called Carl over to assist him with saving his document; there was a sense of collaboration between Carl and Ms. Murphy as they worked. Central to sociocultural theory is a teacher's ability to "step in" at the appropriate time and manner (Englert et al., 2006). Ms. Murphy demonstrated stepping in when she monitored Carl's level of understanding and then responded by providing access to technology and information he needed (Englert et al., 2006).

Ms. Murphy also provided scaffolding to Mathew during the class period on March 25, 2003, although to a lesser extent than she provided to Carl. Ms. Murphy collaborated with Mathew regarding where the illustrations should be placed in their book. By asking Mathew an open-ended question and then accepting his response as valid, she allowed Mathew to assume ownership of the decision-making regarding the book production (Englert et al., 2006). Afterwards, Ms. Murphy and Mathew looked at examples of illustrations in trade books together.

Ms. Murphy's interactions with the other two students, Michael and Warren, were distinctly different than her interactions with Carl and Mathew. When Michael asked for assistance toward the beginning of the class period, Ms. Murphy first ignored him and then gave him simple directions instead of approaching him and assisting him with his assignment. There were three other interactions with Michael during the class period, but all of them involved redirecting him to get back to

typing his paper; at no point did Ms. Murphy work with him to determine with what he might need assistance or provide him with meaningful academic guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). Ms. Murphy's interactions with Michael resemble the traditional form of teaching Tharp (1993) described as recitation.

The interactions with Michael were lacking in mediated support but they were not negative in nature. The interactions with Warren during the class, however, were punitive and negative in nature and resulted in Warren being excluded from the class. Ms. Murphy's first interaction with Warren, was to ask him what he planned on doing during the class period; she then remarked to him that his behavior caused him to not have a copy of the story and that he would not get to make a book. At this comment, Warren pleaded with Ms. Murphy to allow him to have a book, but she replied "No" (Observation notes, 3/25). Since Warren was not participating with the class project, he was not able to participate with the class for the remainder of the period. At the end of the period, after being redirected a few times by Ms. Bird, Ms. Murphy talked with Warren again. This time she called attention to Warren by discussing confidential information regarding his prescribed medication. She then told him that his behavior was "...a waste of time" (Observation notes). These remarks upset Warren and his subsequent behavior resulted in Ms. Murphy asking him to leave class.

Both Michael and Warren were not included in the community of academic learners during the above class period on March 25, 2003 and were not provided the scaffolded instruction the other two students received. Furthermore, Warren felt

disconnected with the class because of the negative tone Ms. Murphy took with him.

As Stone (1993) indicated, the success of scaffolding is directly related to the

interpersonal relationship between the student and teacher. Warren's resistance to

Ms. Murphy's instruction was most likely directly related to his feeling that he was

not included in the community of learners and was not regarded well by his teacher.

Ms. Murphy's beliefs realized, partially. During the first interview with Ms.

Murphy, she described her instruction in her English class as guided practice in

which she demonstrate the writing process to her students. In the two vignettes

involving the whole-class participation structure, Ms. Murphy directed her students

to write in their writer's workshop notebooks several times indicating that she was

trying to use the Writers Workshop method for her writing process class. Cara

Mulcahy (2005), an experienced writing educator, described Writers Workshop:

> Writers workshop has grown out of the work of Donald Graves and…one can
> identify the key features of the approach. These include creating an
> atmosphere of community and collaboration among students, purposeful
> evaluation through the use of portfolios, the publication of student work,
> fostering a desire for a lifelong love of reading and writing, and teacher
> modeling (Mulcahy, 2005, p. 9).

Ms. Murphy included several aspects of the workshop approach in her class,

such as, publication of her students' writing, having the class work on the writing

process together and discussion of writing conventions during the writing process.

However, because Ms. Murphy directed much of the writing of the fairytale without

scaffolding and did not cull an actual community of learners with all of her students,

she did not fulfill many of the most important aspects of Writers Workshop.

Ms. Bennett

This section illustrates the major themes or findings I discovered through analyzing the data from Ms. Bennett's classroom. I begin by describing Ms. Bennett's beliefs regarding teaching literacy to her students. I then present Ms. Bennett's instructional practices through the use of three participation structures: whole-class, individualized, and small-group work. Because of my theoretical bias regarding the need for social interaction and contextualized activities during instruction, I follow each vignette with interpretation using sociocultural theory.

Ms. Bennett's beliefs regarding literacy instruction. This section highlights Ms. Bennett's beliefs regarding literacy instruction and beliefs Ms. Bennett had regarding her students and the self-contained program she taught.

In the dialogue that follows from our first interview, Ms. Bennett talked about her belief that children learn to write by reading samples of good writing and that she believed it is important to combine reading and writing instruction together.

> C: How do you believe that children learn to read and write?
> Ms. B: Well, I think that children learn to write by reading. The more you read the better writer you are, the better ideas and scope you have of the different things you can do with writing…I think that you need to read kids samples of good writing so that they have an idea of what good writing looks like. So when we're talking about writing with voice, I put up on the overhead different pieces that show good voice, medium voice, poor voice and we talk about that…So I think, in order to be a good writer, you have to see good writing and discuss good writing, and know what elements are in good writing (Interview, 3/25/03).

Ms. Bennett expanded on her belief of combining reading and writing

instruction in our second interview:

> For instance, if we're working on [writing] story introductions, I'll go through my... chapter books and I'll pick out examples of good introductions and we'll talk about how that grabs you, how that makes you interested, what that, how did that make you wanna read? What about it makes you want to read more? (Interview, 5/6/03).

In that same interview, Ms. Bennett gave an example of how she used authentic literature during writing instruction by reading a book with her students before she did a writing lesson on persuasive writing:

> When we did persuasive writing, when we kind of started that and were doing some practice, I used the book, *Hey Little Ant*. It's about a boy who wants to squish an ant and the ant is begging him not to. And [the students] had a letter to the boy convincing him to go ahead and squish the ant or to the boy convincing him not to squish the ant (Interview, 5/6/03).

In the above interview excerpts, Ms. Bennett indicated that she believed presenting examples of good writing and discussing those examples with her students was important for writing instruction; she used the example that she compared and contrasted introductions written by published authors for her students so they would understand better how to write an attention-grabbing introduction. Ms. Bennett also asserted how she believed that actually modeling the process of writing for her students was important:

...at the beginning of the year when we start doing journal writing, I write the journal on the overhead like how I would write it, and I think out loud with the kids so they can hear what I'm saying, same thing when I edit (Interview, 5/6/03).

Ms. Bennett's beliefs about literacy instruction align with the tenets of

sociocultural theory. Her beliefs about modeling the writing process could also be characterized as examples of *mediated social interaction* (Wertsch et. al., 1993). For example, in the quote above, Ms. Bennett said that she verbalized her thinking as she wrote a journal entry; by discussing her thought processes, she demonstrated the process of writing. This verbalization is an example of verbal and social interaction by a *more knowledgeable other* (Wertsch et al., 1993). Vygotsky (1978) believed that effectively mediated interactions helped students achieve a higher level of cognition than they could achieve by themselves**.**

Participation structures used during instruction. During the preliminary analysis of my observation data from Ms. Bennett's classroom, I paid particular attention to the activities of Ms. Bennett, her aide and the students during each class session. I also looked at the nature of their social interactions within those activities. From this analysis, I found that Ms. Bennett used three different teacher-student participation structures during literacy instruction.

As seen in Figure 6, across my nine observations, Ms. Bennett's instruction included the following participation structures: Ms. Bennett provided instruction to the whole class; Ms. Bennett and her aide provided instruction to individual students while the students worked independently, and Ms. Bennett had students work together in small groups. Whole-class instruction was utilized for portions of three class periods (e.g. 2/11, 3/25 and 4/8); individualized instruction with independent seatwork was utilized for either a portion of or the entire period during seven class periods (e.g., 3/4, 3/7, 3/14, 3/19, 3/25, 4/8, and 4/15); finally,

Ms. Bennett had her students work in small groups for a portion of three class periods (e.g., 2/11, 4/15 and 5/2).

I also demonstrate, in Figure 6, the actual minutes each participation structure was used during each class period. Notice that individualized instruction was used for the majority of the observation sessions (7/9), and the majority of the time within those observations (75% of the time or 294/390 minutes). Ms. Bennett used whole class instruction and small-group work to a lesser degree than individualized instruction.

Figure 6: Minutes spent in different participation structures in Ms. Bennett's class, per observation									
Participation structures observed in Ms. Bennett's classroom	2/11	3/4	3/7	3/14	3/19	3/25	4/8	4/15	5/2
Whole-class instruction	27	0	0	0	0	19	15	0	0
Individualized instruction	0	42	78	58	42	24	27	23	0
Small-group work	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	78

In the sub-sections below, I describe each of the above participation structures through vignettes illustrating both the instructional practices and the activities Ms. Bennett used within each participation structure. As with Ms. Murphy's part, the observation sessions chosen for the vignettes because they contained the most social interaction data. For Ms. Bennett, I provide more detail in the individualized instruction sub-section because that participation structure was

utilized the majority of the time during my observations. After each vignette, I interpret the data in light of Ms. Bennett's use of both mediated social interaction and meaningful content in keeping with my sociocultural theoretical lens (Vygotsky, 1978).

Whole-class instruction. In this section on Ms. Bennett's instructional practice during the participation structure of whole-class instruction, I present a vignette from the class observation on March 25; the activities within this vignette were similar to activities used in the other class sessions of this participation structure. The vignette below included a daily oral language activity and a lesson on writing a persuasive essay. Notice the interaction patterns that occurred between the teacher and students during this vignette.

Vignette. On March 25, 2003, I arrived at Ms. Bennett's classroom at 10:31a.m., as English period was just beginning. The students were engaged in a Daily Oral Language activity in which the students were to make grammatical and spelling corrections to two sentences written on the white board at the front of the classroom. The following text box illustrates the two sentences the students corrected (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Daily Oral Language assignment from 3/25/03

1. in 1817, the capable british author mary shelly wrote this amazing book called Frankenstein, "said Miss Cohen.
2. Many people think that Frankenstein is the montor name, but it is actdually the name of the scientist who created the monster

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As I entered Ms. Bennett's classroom, I noted some commotion among the

students because a boy, Tommy, was passing gas and laughing about it. Ms. Bennett

gave Tommy a warning but he and the other students engaged in several more

minutes of giggling; Ms. Bennett then sent Tommy out into the hallway. At the same

moment, Ms. Morgan, the instructional aide, entered the room with a student from a

different class. Ms. Morgan then moved a table out into the hall to administer an

individualized, standardized assessment to the other student for the remainder of

the class period.

At 10:41 a.m., Ms. Bennett moved to the white board at the front of the

classroom to correct the Daily Oral Language assignment with her students. She

began by asking the students for the corrections of the first sentence on the board.

She proceeded to call for responses from students one at a time who raised their

hands:

> Ms. Bennett: "Dean?"
> Dean: "There needs to be a period?"
> Ms. Bennett: "No," Justin then raised his hand. "Justin"?
> Justin: "It needs capitals".
> Ms. Bennett: "Yes" (Observation notes, 3/25/03).

After Ms. Bennett and her students completed the corrections for sentence

one, Ms. Bennett read the second sentence to the students. She then successively

called on three students who raised their hands. After both sentences were

corrected, Ms. Bennett announced to the class, "Get out a piece of paper"

(Observation notes, 3/25/03). At that moment the classroom door opened and a

student entered the room. He handed Ms. Bennett a note; after she read the note she

gave him a task to do at a desk in the room. Justin asked why the student was in

class and Ms. Bennett told Justin that the student was "in trouble" (Observation notes). The student remained at a desk at the side of the room for the remainder of the period.

After getting the new student settled, Ms. Bennett returned to the whiteboard at the front of class to introduce the next lesson. Before she could actually talk about the lesson, however, several students blurted out questions to her as others made comments to one another. Ms. Bennett then spent several minutes talking to the students about interrupting behavior; she told the students that they should raise their hands before speaking in class and that the time she spent dealing with interruptions took away from the students' learning.

After the short lecture on interruptions, Ms. Bennett proceeded to introduce a lesson on persuasive writing. She began by writing *Pro* and *Con* next to each other on the whiteboard and instructed the students to raise their hands and tell her reasons for or against "staying in school for 12 years" (Observation notes, 3/25/03). After the class generated several statements under both categories, Ms. Bennett told the students: "You will decide which viewpoint you'll represent; then you're going to argue your point. I want you to try your hand at a persuasive paper" (Observation notes). She explained to the students that a persuasive paper was organized by first telling the audience what position they were taking, and then putting several sentences down supporting that position. Ms. Bennett ended the instruction of the persuasive paper by handing out three pages that had been copied from a published source.

Interpretation of vignette. In the vignette above from March 25, there were

fifteen interactions that occurred between Ms. Bennett and her students. Three of

those interactions were corrections or redirections for behavior; an example of a

corrective social interaction was when Ms. Bennett addressed the whole class with a

lecture on the inappropriateness of interrupting behavior. The purpose of the

corrective interactions was primarily to stop certain student behaviors, such as

interrupting the teacher as she was talking.

The remaining interactions within the whole group participation vignette

above were instructional; however, most of those interactions involved Ms. Bennett

asking a close-ended question and then calling on the students who raised their

hands. The students then responded in short phrases, sometimes one word. Ms.

Bennett's structure is an example of the Initiation—Response—Evaluation (IRE)

format in a traditional lesson (Cazden, 2001). Cazden (2001) indicated that the IRE

format is one of the most common as well as one of the oldest patterns of discourse

used by teachers; Cazden (2001) referred to it as the "default option" for classroom

lessons.

One example of Ms. Bennett's use of the IRE format was when she introduced

the persuasive essay assignment. Ms. Bennett asked her students to tell her reasons

for or against staying in school and then she wrote the students' responses on the

board. Ms. Bennett did not pause or use *wait time* after she called on her students.

Cazden (2001) described the benefits of *wait time* to include increased use of

language and cognitive gains. Also, Ms. Bennett used short and inflexible feedback to

her students; for example, when Dean made an incorrect response, Ms. Bennett only responded "no" and immediately called on another student. In this way, Ms. Bennett was limiting *speaking rights* (Cazden, 2001) to certain students and certain information. Legitimate responses were those that Ms. Bennett had pre-determined. In contrast, Ms. Bennett could have opened up a discussion about whether Dean's response of "There needs to be a period?" (Observation notes, 3/14) had relevancy in other contexts, or she could have given him the opportunity to elaborate on his ideas. Vygotsky (1978) believed that a community of learners increases the quality of knowledge that can be achieved by an individual. By limiting the speaking rights in her classroom, Ms. Bennett limited the opportunity to develop that community and therefore limited the quality of knowledge her students had the opportunity to obtain additional knowledge.

Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) also believed that students gain cognitively in contextualized, authentic activities. The activities Ms. Bennett chose for the class— Daily Oral Language corrections and the persuasive essay—were not authentic. Both activities were pulled from workbooks of de-contextualized activities. These activities did not engage the students' background knowledge or experiences and therefore did not engage them as learners.

The activities of March 25, above, were similar to the two observations on February 11 and April 8 that also included the participation structure of whole-class instruction because all three observations were shorter than 30 minutes in length and involved activities in which Ms. Bennett introduced a lesson, asked for

responses from the students, and then called on the students who raised their hands for short phrase responses.

Individualized instruction. In the following section, I describe the instructional practices used by Ms. Bennett during the participation structure of individualized instruction. For most of the observations in this participation structure, Ms. Bennett's students were working on a multi-week research/biographical assignment for Black History month (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Writing activities used during each class session in Ms. Bennett's class

	2/11	3/4	3/7	3/14	3/19	3/25	4/8	4/15	5/2
Activity	Bibliography and note-taking lesson for Black History Project	WOD and Black History Project	WOD and Black History Project	DOL and Black History Project	Black History Project	DOL and Persuasive Essay	Persuasive Essay (cont'd): Fact lesson	WOD and Persuasive Essays	Persuasive Essays

Ms. Bennett explained her rationale for the Black History Month project in our first interview:

> …I thought we would use the month of February to do a Black History Month project; instead it took all of Black History Month and half of another month. But that's one of the hardest projects we do all year because there are so many steps and they have to be motivated to get it done. One thing we did better this year was to go through step by step and give them small goals of what they needed to get accomplished. But it did take way longer; they have not ever…They haven't had much experience with having to read and pick out information that they can then relate in their own words… (Interview,

3/25/03).

For the remainder of this section, I describe a vignette from the class session on March 14, 2003 and follow with an interpretation of that vignette. On March 14, the opening assignment was for the students to work on a Daily Oral Language task. After the students completed their Daily Oral Language activity, the students were to work independently on their projects. I've chosen to highlight the interactions with two students in particular, Shawn and Manuel, because the teacher and aide engaged in the most conversation with those students during this particular class period. As you read the following two vignettes that occurred simultaneously, attend to the social-interaction patterns that occurred between the students and teacher/aide. Also, notice the instruction Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan provided to the students and whether it meets the Ms. Bennett's above objectives of giving the students small goals.

Vignette 1: Shawn. On March 14, I walked into Ms. Bennett's classroom about two minutes after English period had begun at 8:10a.m., and sat down at my usual desk in the middle of the room to set up my laptop computer. I immediately noticed the day's agenda written on the chalkboard in the front of the classroom explaining that the students were to begin the period by completing a Daily Oral Language (DOL) activity in which the students copied two sentences written on the white board at the front of the classroom and made spelling and grammar corrections to the sentences; when they were finished with their DOL, the students were to continue working on their projects for Black History month. As I glanced around the

room, I noted there were six students in class: Justin sat on the floor in the relaxation corner listening to music; three boys—Shawn, Tommy and Dean—were seated at desks throughout the small room and a boy named Manuel was seated at one of the computers along the wall. Finally, the only girl, Ally, stood by Ms. Bennett's desk and listened as Ms. Bennett and the aide, Ms. Morgan, discussed Ally's paper. As the students worked on their DOL, the classroom was quiet except for the sounds of Justin's headphones and the hushed discussion between Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan.

As Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan finished their discussion, Ally sat down at the desk nearest Ms. Bennett's desk. Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan proceeded to walk between the desks to check on the students' progress on their Black History projects. As the period progressed, several students expressed the need for assistance from Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan. For instance, at approximately 8:20 a.m., Ms. Morgan approached Shawn to assist him with his biography on Denzel Washington. Because Shawn was confused about the nature of the project, Ms. Morgan explained the assignment to him:"You start with Denzel Washington is an actor, then go to the section on his movies, then talk about when he was in college…" (Observation notes, 3/14). Shawn replied to her with a reference to his DOL assignment that he had not completed, "I think I'm going to work on my sentences" (Observation notes). Ms. Morgan responded, "You need to work on your report; at the rate you're going I don't think you're going to finish your sentences if you haven't already" (Observation notes). Ms. Morgan then walked away from Shawn to

assist other students.

After approximately ten minutes, Ms. Morgan returned to Shawn's desk and said in an accusing tone, "Are you working? No, you're drawing! Big shocker"! (Observation notes, 3/14). She then sat by Shawn and assisted him more directly by reading through the reference material Shawn had been reviewing on Denzel Washington. As Ms. Morgan read through the biographical passage, she helped Shawn note pertinent information by saying, "Let's put a star next to that, next to several sentences" (Observation notes). Ms. Morgan then left Shawn for a few minutes to talk to Ms. Bennett and check on other students; when she passed by Shawn's desk, she told him to get to work and "…one paragraph in a class period is not enough" (Observation notes). Ms. Morgan then walked around the classroom for a few more minutes; when she returned to Shawn's desk, she sat down next to him encouraging him to keep writing. As Ms. Morgan was sitting with Shawn, Ms. Bennett walked by and said to Shawn, "You are such a slug lately" (Observation notes).

After a few minutes, Ms. Morgan got up to leave Shawn's desk when he asked her, "Where does it say what his mother does?" to which Ms. Morgan replied, "I don't know, look by the blue stars" (Observation notes, 3/14). Ms. Morgan then left Shawn alone for ten more minutes but when she returned to his desk, he had not found the information he was looking for. She briefly looked over his shoulder and then said, "Ok, Shawn, if you can find the answer, I will give you candy" (Observation notes). A few minutes later she circled back to his desk and he still had not found the

sentence. Ms. Morgan said to Shawn, "What did Denzel Washington's mom do?"

(Observation notes). Shawn looked again for the sentence that had eluded him for

most of the class period; as the class period came to a close, Ms. Bennett walked

over to Shawn's desk and pointed out the sentence for which Shawn had been

searching. Because Shawn could not read the word *beautician*, he had not been able

to find the sentence that described the occupation of Denzel Washington's mother

despite the fact that Ms. Morgan marked the information for him toward the

beginning of the period.

 Interpretation of vignette 1. During the above vignette, Ms. Bennett or Ms.

Morgan had ten different interactions with Shawn; eight of those interactions were

intended to correct behavior. For instance, when Ms. Morgan asked Shawn if he was

working, she said in a sarcastic tone, "No, you're drawing! Big shocker!"(Observation

notes, 3/14); in this interaction Ms. Morgan tried to get Shawn to work on his

project. Ms. Bennett also commented to Shawn when she said, "You're such a slug

lately"; it is not clear from the context whether Ms. Bennett was attempting to

correct Shawn's immediate behavior or call attention to a pattern of behavior. Both

of these corrective interactions with Shawn were negative and could be construed

as demeaning to Shawn. The negative quality of the interactions influence has a

significant impact on Shawn's ability to profit from his teachers' feedback. Stone

(1993) wrote that the quality of interpersonal interactions actually affects whether

students gain knowledge in learning situations. In his chapter about specific

communicative processes involved in scaffolding, Stone (1993) indicated that "the

effectiveness of interactions within the *zone of proximal development* varies as a function of the interpersonal relationship between the participants" (Stone, 1993). Because Ms. Morgan and Ms. Bennett made negative comments toward Shawn, they were not as effective with Shawn instructionally.

The other two social interactions that occurred between Shawn and Ms. Morgan in the above vignette were instructional. For example, Ms. Morgan said to Shawn, "You need to work on your report…" and "Let's put a start next to that…" (Observation notes, 3/14/03). During these two instructional interactions, however, Ms. Morgan actually completed Shawn's note-taking for him. *Scaffolding* is described by Stone (1993) as a process in which the adult assists a student to realize their potential for new learning. Despite the fact that Ms. Morgan assisted Shawn, Shawn was still not able to find the important facts after Ms. Morgan left his desk.

Vignette 2: Manuel. During the same class period on March 14, a student, Manuel, also worked on his Black History project. At the beginning of the class period, Manuel sat at a computer taking notes from a website regarding the subject of his biography, Jackie Robinson. As Ms. Bennett left the conversation with Ms. Morgan and Ally at her desk, she walked by Manuel at the computer and said, "Manuel, spit out the gum"; to which Manuel replied, "I don't got no more" (Observation notes, 3/14). Ms. Bennett then said, "Let me see" (Observation notes); Manuel opened his mouth so Ms. Bennett could confirm that he did not have gum in his mouth. Manuel then continued to write anecdotes from the website onto his paper. After approximately fif15 minutes, Manuel announced aloud, "I'm finished"

(Observation notes) to which Ms. Morgan replied from Shawn's desk, "I'm coming"

(Observation notes). She walked to Manuel's computer to help him, read over his

notes and said to Manuel, "He couldn't afford it or they couldn't afford it?"

(Observation notes). Ms. Morgan sat with Manuel for a few minutes as she read

through Manuel's draft report making corrections and spelling suggestions. After

she completed her editing, Ms. Morgan explained to Manuel that he was done with

the timeline portion of the project and therefore could proceed to the next part of

the project.

Manuel then returned to his desk, got his poster board out of his desk so he

could work on the poster part of his Black History Project. Ms. Bennett walked over

to Manuel's desk and gave him some directions regarding his poster and asked

Tommy to move his desk up so Manuel could fit his poster on the floor. Ms. Bennett

also asked Justin to help Manuel with his poster; instead, Justin placed his

earphones, with loud music playing, next to Tommy's ear. Manuel then remarked

aloud, "I already wrote Jackie Robinson; what do I need now?" (Observation notes,

3/14). Ms. Morgan replied to him from the other side of the room, "Where's your

timeline? The timeline has to be on your poster" (Observation notes).

After Ms. Bennett asked Justin to help Manuel, she reviewed the grading

rubric for the Black History project with Ally. A few minutes later, she noticed that

Manuel sitting looking at his poster, not working. She told Manuel to go upstairs to

the library and make a copy of a picture of Jackie Robinson for his poster from

several pictures he had downloaded off of the internet Manuel left the classroom but

after only a few minutes, he returned to class and announced loudly to no one in particular that the librarian told him he could make a bigger copy of the picture if he wanted. Ms. Bennett then asked him if he wanted a bigger picture, to which he replied, "No" (Observation notes, 3/14). Ms. Morgan then told him to cut his picture out and add some color. Manuel spent the remaining ten minutes of class on the floor cutting and coloring his copied picture and then attaching it to his poster.

Interpretation of vignette 2. In this vignette regarding Manuel, there were seven interactions that occurred between Ms. Bennett or her aide and Manuel; five of the interactions were to correct behavior. The first behavioral interaction between Ms. Bennett and Manuel involved chewing gum. The remaining four behavioral interactions were short statements by either Ms. Bennett or her aide, Ms. Morgan, to encourage Manuel to make progress on his Black History Project. For example, Ms. Morgan told Manuel that his timeline (which she had corrected with Manuel) needed to go on his poster. Several minutes later Manuel was given another redirection from Ms. Bennett about how to proceed on his poster because he was still not working. Cazden (2001) explained that appropriate scaffolding occurs when a learner is able to independently problem-solve a task they could previously not complete even with assistance. As seen above, Ms. Bennett's and Ms. Mogan's redirection was not effective in assisting Manuel to continue working; therefore, he did not receive the scaffolding he needed to be able to make progress on his project.

The other two social interactions that occurred during this vignette between Ms. Bennett or Ms. Morgan and Manuel were instructional. The first was when Ms.

Morgan sat with Manuel to go make corrections on his biographical timeline. In this interaction, Ms. Morgan made the corrections for Manuel instead of discussing her feedback with him. In this way, Ms. Morgan did not scaffold her comments for Manuel; Cazden (2001) described that scaffolding involves the teacher using different mediational tools, such as asking questions and modeling for the student, to assist the student to achieve at a higher level than he could do by himself. Ms. Morgan's method of instruction in this example did not involve any mediational tools; she merely told Manuel what was incorrect on his timeline. Similarly, in the second instruction interaction between Ms. Bennett and Manuel, Ms. Bennett did not model the poster for Manuel to help him understand what the finished project might look like, but gave him verbal directions and asked another student to help Manuel.

The vignettes above, illustrating the individualized participation structure, are representative of the other observations that occurred using the teacher-individual participation structure (e.g., 3/4, 3/7, 3/14, 3/19, 4/8, 4/15) because during those observations, the students also sat individually at their desks working on an assignment while the teacher and aide responded to individual questions.

Summary of Ms. Bennett's use of individualized instruction. The social interactions that occurred during the participation structure of individualized instruction were primarily behavioral corrections. Furthermore, Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan used a negative tone when they corrected the behavior of both Shawn and Manuel, at times using put downs toward the students. These negative behavioral interactions influenced the learning environment in the classroom. One

of the cornerstones of sociocultural theory is how interconnected the quality of
social interactions are with the acquisition of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Because
both Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan used sarcasm and name-calling with their
students, not only did they affect the relationship with their students, they
negatively affected their students' ability to learn (Stone, 1993).

     Small-group work. In the following section, I describe the instructional
practices Ms. Bennett used during the participation structure of small-group
instruction, instruction that involved students working together in dyads or triads.
For 20 minutes during the class period on April 15, the students in Ms. Bennett's
class worked in dyads discussing each other's written paragraphs from the previous
day. The assignment was written on the white board as the students entered the
class (see Figure 9). Although Manuel's name was on the board, he was not in class
on this day. I follow the vignette with some interpretation of the class session.

Figure 9: Small-group assignment, 4/15/03

Look at each paragraph your partner wrote yesterday and discuss the following
questions:
    1.   Is the fact stated clearly?
    2.   Do the examples support the fact?
    3.   Do the examples tell about events or situations that can be checked by other
        people?
<u>Partners</u>:
Dean and Manuel
Ally and Chase
Shawn and Justin

     English period on April 15 began at 8:55 a.m.; for the first ten minutes of the
period, the students worked on an assignment called *Word-of-the-Day* in which they

were to look up a vocabulary word in the dictionary and write the definition. At 9:05 a.m., Ms. Bennett approached Chase to encourage him to work on his assignments because his partner's grade would be affected if he didn't finish his Word-of-the-day assignment. She then said to the whole class, "Word-of-the-days are going in your resource folder in two minutes, if they're not finished" (Observation notes, 4/15). [Each student had a *resource folder* that contained unfinished work; students were to complete work from these folders when they had finished assignments during independent work-time.]

At the prompting from Ms. Bennett to turn in the Word-of-the day assignment, Shawn walked up to Ms. Bennett with his assignment; Ms. Bennett then checked the assignment and told Shawn it needed to go in his resource folder because it wasn't complete. Ms. Bennett located Shawn's paragraph from the previous day in the resource folder and as she handed it to Shawn, told him that he needed to work with Justin. Justin then asked, "What are we supposed to do?" (Observation notes, 4/15). To which Ms. Bennett replied, "Might that be the reason I write things on the board?" Justin said, "I can't see it", (Observation notes). Ms. Bennett read the top of the white board to Justin out loud (see Figure 9). Justin appeared to be confused so Ms. Bennett explained further by saying, "You're going to read Shawn's paragraph and see if the fact is stated clearly" (Observation notes).

Ms. Bennett then went to talk to another student, Dean; she told Dean to finish his Word-of-the-day assignment and get out his fact paragraph. She then noticed that Shawn and Justin were not working and told Justin to partner with Ally

instead of Shawn. She told him to change partners because Shawn was not yet finished with his paragraph. The aide, Ms. Morgan, gave Ally and Justin *Thank-yous* [a written note that acted as a positive reinforcement for compliant behavior] for their cooperation since Shawn was not complying with Ms. Bennett's directions and Dean was not working on his assignment. At the same time that Ms. Morgan gave written reinforcement to Ally and Justin, Ms. Bennett told Shawn that it was important to finish his paragraph; she then said, "You've had an attitude for the past three days," (Observation notes, 4/15). After Shawn's behavior remained unchanged, Ms. Bennett mentioned several consequences she might give Shawn. Shawn replied that he was going to go get a job and did not need to do the assignment, to which Ms. Bennett replied, "You're gone; leave" (Observation notes). When Shawn refused to leave, Ms. Bennett told him she would call the assistant principal, Mr. Shelly, to have Shawn removed and that Shawn would have in-house suspension for five days if he didn't go; Shawn then left the classroom.

Ms. Bennett then approached Dean and asked him, "How close are you to having those fact clusters done?" Dean's reply was inaudible to me. Ms. Bennett then told him, "You will have lunch detention every day this week if you don't get it done this period" (Observation notes, 4/15). She then told Ally and Justin to move on their assignment and gave Chase a *Thank-you* for working on his paragraph. Ally and Justin responded to Ms. Bennett's directions by facing one another and looking at each other's paragraphs but talked minimally or not at all. After a few minutes, Ally asked, "What do we do next" (Observation notes). Ms. Bennett explained that when

they were done asking questions of each other for both paragraphs, they were done. Ally and Justin then turned in their paragraphs to Ms. Bennett. They both stapled their *Thank-yous* to a bulletin board in the class. Ms. Bennett told Justin to work on an assignment for another class and gave Ally free time for the rest of the period, approximately fif15 more minutes. Ally asked if she could go on an errand and Ms. Bennett sent her up to the main office.

In the meantime, Dean and Chase finished their paragraphs and worked together on the assignment written on the white board. However, after a few minutes, Chase described in a loud voice an accident that happened to him the previous day involving a metal splinter in his ankle from his father's truck. Ally returned from the errand to tell Ms. Bennett that the in-house suspension supervisor had to wake Tommy 20 times and then handed Ms. Bennett the work Tommy had been assigned for the period. [Another student, Tommy, was in in-house suspension for the entire that day.] Ms. Bennett told Ally and Chase to get a book and read. Ally and Chase did not read; they walked around the room for a few minutes and ended up getting redirected because they were fooling around, throwing paperclips at each other. Ms. Bennett said to them, "That was not a choice; get a book and read" (Observation notes, 4/15).

The above small group assignment vignette was similar to the other two observation sessions when the participation structure of small-group instruction was used (e.g., 2/11 and 5/2) because an assignment was given to small groups of students but meaningful social interaction between students was limited.

Interpretation of vignette. In the above vignette on small-group instruction there were nine15 interactions between Ms. Bennett or Ms. Morgan and the students; 17 of those interactions were for the purpose of changing behavior—primarily to encourage students to get back to work. These behavioral interactions were included neutral redirections, threats, and negative redirections in the form of sarcasm or put-downs. There were also three behavioral interactions that involved Ms. Bennett or Ms. Morgan giving students rewards in the form of personalized cards referred to as *Thank-yous*.

In the beginning of the vignette, Ms. Bennett encouraged Chase to get to work on the opening assignment; this was an example of a neutral redirection. Three other redirections, however, were in the form of threat of consequence; an example of a threat was when Ms. Bennett told Dean that he would have several days of lunch detention if he didn't complete his assignments. Ms. Bennett also made several comments in a negative tone; one such comment was when she responded to Justin's need for clarification by saying with sarcasm, "Might that be the reason I write things on the board?" (Observation notes 4/15). Another example of a negative interaction intended to change behavior was when she told Shawn, "You've had an attitude for the past three days," (Observation notes).

The examples of negative tone and threats are similar interactions to those seen in the individualized instruction participation structure. These negative interactions are examples of what I discussed earlier regarding the teachers' behavior affecting interpersonal relationships in the classroom which in turn

affected the students' ability to benefit from the literacy activities assigned (Stone, 1993). Furthermore, the quality of interactions that occurred during this participation structure made it improbable that mediation within the students' zones of proximal development would occur (Wertsch et al., 1993).

There were also two instructional interactions that occurred in the above vignette; these interactions were primarily restated directions. This type of instruction is again reminiscent of recitation, a traditional form of instruction in which students passively work on assignments; recitation is described as rote learning and does not include in-depth teaching of content or concepts (Tharp, 1993). For example, when Justin asked what he was supposed to do for the class period, Ms. Bennett indicated that Justin should have known what to do because the directions had been on the board since the beginning of class. Ms. Bennett did explain to Justin that he was to read his partner's paragraph and check for a clearly stated fact; Ms. Bennett did not elaborate further, however. This instance could have been an opportunity to scaffold the assignment for Justin by discussing what a clearly stated fact looked like; Ms. Bennett could have also worked with Justin and Ally's by modeling what a peer-discussion looks like (Cazden, 2001). Interestingly, there were no interactions this vignette between the students during their peer-group meetings that were the intended activity for the class period. The two dyads that met never actually discussed the paragraphs of their partners despite pairing up to do so. Ms. Bennett did not check for actual conversations either.

Incongruence between Ms. Bennett's beliefs and instructional practices.

In the beginning of this section about Ms. Bennett, I described several beliefs Ms. Bennett held regarding teaching reading and writing to her students. These beliefs included reading and discussing samples of good writing with her students, combining reading and writing instruction and modeling the writing process for her students. I remarked earlier that these beliefs are consistent with sociocultural theory because she mentioned contextualized writing activities and scaffolding the writing process through modeling. Ms. Bennett also shared that one of her primary goals for her program was to develop independent adults.

Through the above sub-sections on the participation structures of instruction, I presented examples of Ms. Bennett's instruction. During the class sessions that included the participation structures of whole-class and small-group, the students worked on writing assignments without an authentic reading source, despite the fact that Ms. Bennett asserted that reading and writing instruction should occur together. Furthermore, Ms. Bennett did not model the writing assignments that she used in those classes—a persuasive essay and fact cluster assignment. It was as if Ms. Bennett expected her students to complete their writing assignments independently without further explanation or instruction. Ms. Bennett did not provide any scaffolding to the students so they could more successfully complete their assignments.

In the individualized instruction participation structure, there were several instances in which Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan spoke negatively to their students

when they were not working on their assignments. Also, most of the interactions

during that participation structure were behavioral redirections instead of

instructional. Although Ms. Bennett stated that she wanted to develop independence

in her students, the students seemed dependent on the one-on-one help from Ms.

Bennett and her aide to progress on their projects. The students did not appear to

have confidence in their ability to complete their research project independently.

In closing, through my observation and analysis of Ms. Bennett's

instructional practices over nine class periods, I did not witness Ms. Bennett using

the instructional practices she espoused. Despite the sociocultural alignment of Ms.

Bennett's beliefs as she described them to me in our interviews, there was limited

evidence of contextualized activities and scaffolding in her instructional practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Students identified with emotional and behavior disorders in public schools in the United States often do not have positive educational outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Although the reasons for their school failure are many and varied, one variable in their academic failure is that many of these students are provided their education in segregated settings that have historically been attributed with less rigorous instruction (Stainback & Stainback, 1990, U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Because some of these students require the intensity of support that is provided in these segregated settings, it is important to discover instructional practices that are rigorous and can be effective in self-contained settings (Lane et al., 2005).

Both the research with struggling adolescent readers (e.g., Moje, 2000) and a study that interviewed teachers of students with EBD (e.g., Coleman & Vaughn, 2000) indicated that instruction incorporating meaningful activities with students' background knowledge and structured social interaction is a promising practice with these students. Research suggests that instruction that includes the tenets of sociocultural theory (i.e., contextualized content and mediated social interaction) can improve students' motivation to learn as well as their academic achievement (Gambrell, Dromsky, and Mazzoni 2000; Moore et al., 2000).

For my study, I investigated the beliefs and practices of two teachers who taught students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBD) in self-contained

settings. Because of the continued disconnect between research and practice with students with EBD, it is important to elucidate what is occurring currently in these settings in order to suggest practices that make sense for those contexts. I have provided some insight into current situations.

Findings

My study sought to explore the beliefs and instructional practices of two teachers in self-contained settings for students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBD). I framed my results by first describing the instructional beliefs of each teacher and then describing each teacher's instructional practices by the participation structures each teacher used during literacy instruction. I then interpreted those instructional practices through the lens of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) because of my biases regarding the importance of mediated social interactions and meaningful activities during instruction.

In the following sections, I first discuss the similarities between Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett's beliefs regarding teaching students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBD). I then summarize my findings regarding Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett's instructional practices during the participation structures they used: whole-class, individualized, and small-group. As I describe those practices, I highlight the teachers' opportunities for and actual use of scaffolding, contextualized activities, and community of learners. I end by discussing the teachers' instructional practices as they relate to their stated beliefs.

Beliefs. Both Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett discussed how they believed that

instruction for students with emotional and behavior disorders should have an academic focus; Ms. Murphy explicitly stated that she believed programs for students with EBD were traditionally focused on behaviors instead of academics. This comment by Ms. Murphy is reminiscent of the *curriculum of control* cited by Knitzer et al. (1990) in their seminal study of programs for students with EBD. Ms. Bennett and Ms. Murphy seemed to understand that programs for students with EBD had previously been primarily for quelling behavior but they both believed that a strong academic program was equally important.

Other beliefs held by both Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett included their assertion that reading and writing should be taught together and that modeling of the writing process was an important aspect of literacy instruction. Both of these beliefs align with tenets from sociocultural theory and carry aspects of literature-based instruction in which students are engaged by teachers through meaningful activities and opportunities for discourse with classmates (Vygotsky, 1978; Englert et al., 2006).

Whole-class instruction. The first instructional participation structure I presented was whole-class instruction; both Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett used whole-class instruction for a portion of the time during my observations. For Ms. Murphy, over half of the time that I observed included some whole-class instruction; Ms. Bennett used this participation structure during part of three of the nine times (16% of the time) I observed. Although both teachers used similar forms of interaction during whole-class instruction, there were also differences between the

two teachers' instruction.

One finding from the data was that Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett used behavioral correction and closed-ended directions with their students a high proportion of times during the whole-class participation structure. This finding is significant because, historically, instruction in self-contained classrooms for students with EBD has been criticized for dealing with behavior to the exclusion of quality instruction (Knitzer et al., 1990; Lane et al., 2002). Furthermore, Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett both indicated that they wanted to provide quality instruction in addition to behavior management in their classes.

In addition to the interactions above that were primarily for the purpose of correcting or redirecting negative behavior, I also found that both teachers demonstrated instructional practices that are similar to a traditional form of instruction referred to as Initiation-Response-Evaluate (IRE). IRE is a traditional form of instruction that involves little direction from the teacher but does allow for evaluation of student responses; however, the evaluation component of IRE is based upon only certain responses being accurate, a concept described as *speaking rights* (Cazden, 2001): by sanctioning only certain responses, teachers did not allow students to explore their own ideas.

In addition, by using an IRE format for instruction, Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett limited opportunities for students to explore their ideas or to respond to instruction and/or content. Increased opportunities for students to respond during instruction have been linked in the research literature to improved academic

outcomes for students (Sutherland & Morgan, 2008). In addition, because the students had limited opportunities to respond to instruction, mediation by the teachers, the more knowledgeable others, was not possible.

Because Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett used instructional forms that limited students' opportunities to respond (i.e., IRE) during the whole-class instruction participation structure, opportunities to interact with peers and teachers regarding literacy content were also limited. As seen in studies that used literature-based instruction in their classrooms with diverse learners (Englert & Mariage 1996; Englert et al., 2006), the whole-class participation structure has been used to present rich literacy content and facilitate discourse with students with learning differences. Therefore, despite opportunities for dialogue among class members regarding rich literacy content during whole-class instruction, dialogic interaction was used minimally by Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett.

There were some differences between Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett's instructional practices during the whole-class instruction participation structure. Ms. Murphy demonstrated some instruction that aligned with the tenets of sociocultural theory (i.e., scaffolding, meaningful activities, and community of learners). Ms. Murphy demonstrated the use of scaffolding with her students during the process of writing their book. Furthermore, Ms. Murphy also allowed her students to collaborate regarding the content of the story; however, collaboration on the book project did not continue throughout the process and Ms. Murphy pushed completion of the project to the seeming exclusion of student learning and

true participation.

Ms. Murphy provided some meaningful activities during the whole-class participation structure; for example, she established the students' school as the setting for the fairy tale. Furthermore, Ms. Murphy began to foster a community of learners within her classroom by having the students collaborate regarding the content for the class book together. Unfortunately, a true community of learners was not established because not all students were included in the discussion every class session. Also, Ms. Murphy did not mediate the interactions that did occur between her students and, at times, those interactions led to disagreements instead of discourse.

Ms. Bennett's instruction was different from Ms. Murphy's instruction during whole-class instruction in a couple of ways. First, Ms. Bennett's use of worksheets instead of contextualized activities during the whole-class participation structure limited the ability of her students to apply new knowledge to their existing knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, Ms. Bennett was not able to foster a community of learners during the whole-class participation structure because she used that participation structure minimally and gave students little opportunity to respond during the whole-class instruction she did provide.

Individualized instruction. The second instructional participation structure I presented was individualized instruction; both Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett used individualized instruction for a portion of the time during my observations. Ms. Murphy used individualized instruction for about one-third of the time I observed;

Ms. Bennett used the individualized participation structure for instruction the majority of the time I observed. There were similar interaction patterns between Ms. Murphy's and Ms. Bennett's instruction during the individualized participation structure.

The individualized participation structure provides an ideal opportunity for scaffolding students instructionally, especially in self-contained classrooms that have a lower teacher-to-student ratio than regular education classrooms. Also, because each student is working individually at his/her desk, during individualized instruction, the teacher can walk around and help individuals for several minutes at a time (Kauffman et al., 2002). Despite this instructional opportunity for scaffolding in Ms. Murphy's and Ms. Bennett's classrooms, however, there were only limited mediated social interactions observed during the class sessions I observed. I will discuss each teacher separately within this sub-section.

Ms. Murphy demonstrated some mediated social interactions during the individualized participation structure on March 25 when she assisted Carl with a writing assignment. During this class session, Ms. Murphy demonstrated good use of the *step in/step out* concept of scaffolding (Englert et al., 2006); Ms. Murphy was able to model the conventions of writing that Carl needed while also allowing him to take increasing control of his writing as the class session progressed. Ms. Murphy also demonstrated some scaffolding with Mathew during the same class session. Her mediation with Mathew did not result in the same level of autonomy as she achieved with Carl, but she did have a one-on-one discussion with Mathew in which

she gave him ownership of decision-making regarding his illustrations for the book.

Unfortunately, Ms. Murphy also demonstrated interactions during the individualized participation structure in which she provided very little direction to her students and in one case made disrespectful verbal remarks. During the class session on March 25, there were two other students in class with whom Ms. Murphy interacted, named Michael and Warren. The interactions that occurred between Ms. Murphy and Michael included several comments instructing Michael to work on his assignment without providing any actual directions regarding what he was to do or assistance with the assignment. The interactions between Ms. Murphy and Warren involved a series of negative comments that began with a verbal direction for Warren to get to work, included a remark about Warren not taking his medication, and ended with Warren being told to leave class. These interactions between Ms. Murphy and Warren did not allow Warren to understand his assignment but more importantly, those interactions left Warren feeling disrespected and unsafe in his classroom.

The interactions that occurred in Ms. Bennett's classroom during the individualized instruction participation structure were also characterized by redirecting students in a negative manner. Throughout the class session on March 14, in Ms. Bennett's classroom, there were many interactions that involved behavioral corrections, negative remarks, sarcasm, and put-downs toward the students. These interactions were not effective at getting the students to work on their assignments, despite the teachers' effort. Despite the opportunity to provide

direct instruction to the two students, Shawn and Michael, Ms. Bennett did not take

the time to provide that instruction. Ms. Morgan, Ms. Bennett's instructional aide,

did sit down to assist Shawn several times but instead of scaffolding instruction for

him, Ms. Morgan ended up actually doing the task for Shawn. The pattern of

interactions with Manuel was similar; he was provided many redirections

throughout the class period but was not productive with his assignment by the end

of the class session. Ms. Morgan also helped Manuel early in the class session;

however, she did not go over the editing she provided on his assignment with him.

The participation structure of individualized instruction provided

opportunities for scaffolding instruction because of the opportunity for immediate

feedback from teacher to student because as Cazden (2001) described, a scaffold

"has to change continuously as the child's competence grows" (p. 63). The few

instructional interactions that occurred during the participation structure of

individualized instruction, however, were limited to unidirectional discourse

between the teacher/aide and individual students. Ms. Bennett and Ms. Morgan did

not use effectively the mediational tool of language (e.g., two-way discourse,

questioning and modeling) to scaffold instruction with their students (Cazden,

2001). As they instructed their students, Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett did not ask

questions about their students' thoughts regarding their assignments or try to

determine specifically with what the students needed assistance.

Small-group instruction. The third participation structure I presented in

the results section was small-group instruction. Ms. Bennett used this participation

structure for her instruction during part of two class sessions; Ms. Murphy did not use small-group instruction during any of my observations.

During the class session on April 15, Ms. Bennett assigned a small-group task to her students. Before her students were allowed to get into dyads or triads to complete the small-group assignment, however, they were supposed to finish the essay for which they were meeting. Unfortunately, the students had to be redirected many times by Ms. Bennett and her aide, either because the students did not begin the essay or because they were not working on the essay consistently during the class session. Additionally, some of the redirections that Ms. Bennett and her aide used involved negativity, threats and sarcasm. These negative interactions resulted in compromised relationships between Ms. Bennett and her students; Stone (1993) asserted that the quality of relationships between teachers and their students determines if students can learn from their teachers. By using sarcasm and threats to redirect their students, Ms. Bennett and her aide reduced the chances that their students would benefit from their instruction.

Two of the five students present on April 15 were able to complete the essay and were able to meet in a dyad to discuss their essays; the two students who did meet never discussed the essay, however. Furthermore, although Ms. Bennett noticed the students were not discussing their essay, she did not ask them about the discussion, but only reprimanded them for fooling around in class.

Ms. Bennett's instruction during the small-group participation structure resembled a traditional form of instruction described as *recitation.* Recitation is

described as instruction that involves rote learning and student passivity in which teachers assign tasks and expect students to complete them independently (Tharp, 1993). Furthermore, Ms. Bennett's instruction during this participation structure did not provide the students with access to positive social interactions. Although peer group assignments could be an opportunity for an adult to model dialogue regarding a writing assignment, Ms. Bennett did not take advantage of that opportunity and instead had the students engage in the peer discussion. It is unlikely that without their teacher modeling the expected behavior, the students in Ms. Bennett's class would know how to have a discussion.

Summary. In summary, there were several similarities between the beliefs and practices of Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett regarding their literacy instruction. Both teachers described that they believed in using reading and writing together and modeling the writing process. Also, both teachers used a combination of whole-class and individualized instruction participation structures with their students. Another similarity between Ms. Murphy's and Ms. Bennett's instruction was the limited social interaction utilized in both of their classes. This lack of social interaction limited the ability for the students to have conversations regarding rich, literacy content. Student engagement in the two classes was also a problem in both Ms. Murphy's and Ms. Bennett's classes; student engagement and the lack of meaningful conversations could be related.

One of the objectives of my study was to discover the challenges that teachers of students with emotional and behavior disorders face on a daily basis

with the hope that I could shed light on reasons for the continued disconnect between research and practice in the education for students with EBD. From my results, I see two major challenges with which both teachers had to contend: meeting their own goals of engaging their students with meaningful activities and quality instruction and the continued struggle between managing behavior and providing that rigorous instruction in their classrooms.

The first challenge I found with the teachers in my study was that both teachers struggled to bring into existence their hopes for instruction: engaging their students with quality instruction. Ms. Murphy indicated that she wanted her program to develop students' academic skills in addition to their social/behavioral skills; however, at least two of her students were not able to complete the major literacy project in her class due to behavioral issues. Also, Ms. Bennett wanted to provide integrated reading and writing instruction. Despite this assertion, the results indicate that Ms. Bennett's instruction was not integrated and that her students were often disengaged.

One reason that Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett had difficulty fulfilling their beliefs in the classroom was because they were not able to engage their students instructionally on a daily basis; this challenge is a common one in the field of EBD. As Lane et al., indicated in their article, "Students with EBD also exhibit…low levels of task engagement, low rates of task completion" (p. 7, Lane et al., 2005). I hypothesize that Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett had difficulty engaging their students because their focus was on getting their projects completed instead of focusing on

the instructional process. Both Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett seemed more interested in the product of their instruction instead of the instructional benefits to their students. For Ms. Murphy the instructional product was the finished Fairytale book; as students struggled throughout the book-making process to stay engaged, Ms. Murphy proceeded to get it done. By the end of the book-making process only two students were given a finished book, because they were the only students who completed all of the parts of the book with Ms. Murphy; the rest of the students had either been sent out of the room at different points during the process or had not worked on all of the parts of the book while they were present in class.

For Ms. Bennett, her goal seemed to be for the students to progress from one part of the biographical project to another, whether they had actually completed each part with quality. Ms. Bennett did not routinely make sure that her students were working during individualized instruction nor did she know whether the students had gained instructionally from their time in independent seatwork.

Furthermore, both teachers did not regularly utilize instructional dialogue during their instruction. There were several opportunities for Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett to scaffold instruction for her students in all three participation structures, but they limited the social interaction with her students to simple directions, reprimands and in some cases, put-downs. According to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is first located in the social milieu and then internalized by the learner through tools such as internal dialogue. Without accessible social interaction, the students were less likely to be engaged with instruction.

The other struggle that I found with my study that is related to student engagement is that, despite the fact that both of the teachers in my study were described by their principals as effective teachers and the fact that both teachers held beliefs about literacy instruction that aligned with best practices for literacy instruction, they still struggled to manage student behavior. Many of the social interactions that were noted in all participation structures for both teachers involved behavioral redirection and correction.

Unfortunately, these types of negative interactions have been common in classrooms for students with emotional and behavior disorders; these interactions take the place of rich, engaging conversations regarding literacy content (Lane et al., 2005). As evidenced in my results, the tension between managing behavior and creating rigorous instructional situations existed in these two classrooms. It may be that the teachers did not know how to mediate the students' interactions to conduct those rich discussions without the students acting out.

Theoretical Implications

Because students with emotional and behavioral disorders have both social/emotional deficits as well as academic deficits (Lane et al., 2002), there are several theoretical implications for using instruction that utilizes mediated social interaction and a community of learners with them. Instruction that involves a more knowledgeable other providing mediated interactions in a trusting, caring atmosphere during instruction can help to develop the students' social-emotional selves as well as their understanding of academic content.

Mediated social interaction. One of the most important tenets of sociocultural theory is the idea that knowledge is appropriated by learners through mediated social interaction or scaffolding by a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). This idea is played out in classrooms when students begin to acquire new knowledge by interacting with others around the rich conceptual content through the careful guidance or mediation by their teacher. Integral to this process, however, is the learner's ability to profit from such mediation. I hypothesize that students with emotional and behavior disorders need more scaffolding and mediation than average learners because of the nature of their disabilities.

It is known that students with EBD have difficulty with the ability to functionally interact with others (Lane et al., 2002; Yell et al., 2009). For students with emotional and behavior disorders, basic mediation and scaffolding strategies are already part of best practices during instruction because these students often require more assistance than average students to stay on task and follow directions in the classroom (Lane et al., 2002). Understanding the tenets of Vygotsky's theory could help design instructional paradigms that assist students with EBD with both their academic and social interaction deficits. I believe that students with EBD have actually become accustomed to keeping social interaction at arms' length because of their prior negative experiences. In this way, they are not used to utilizing social interaction for development of thinking and internalization of new learning.
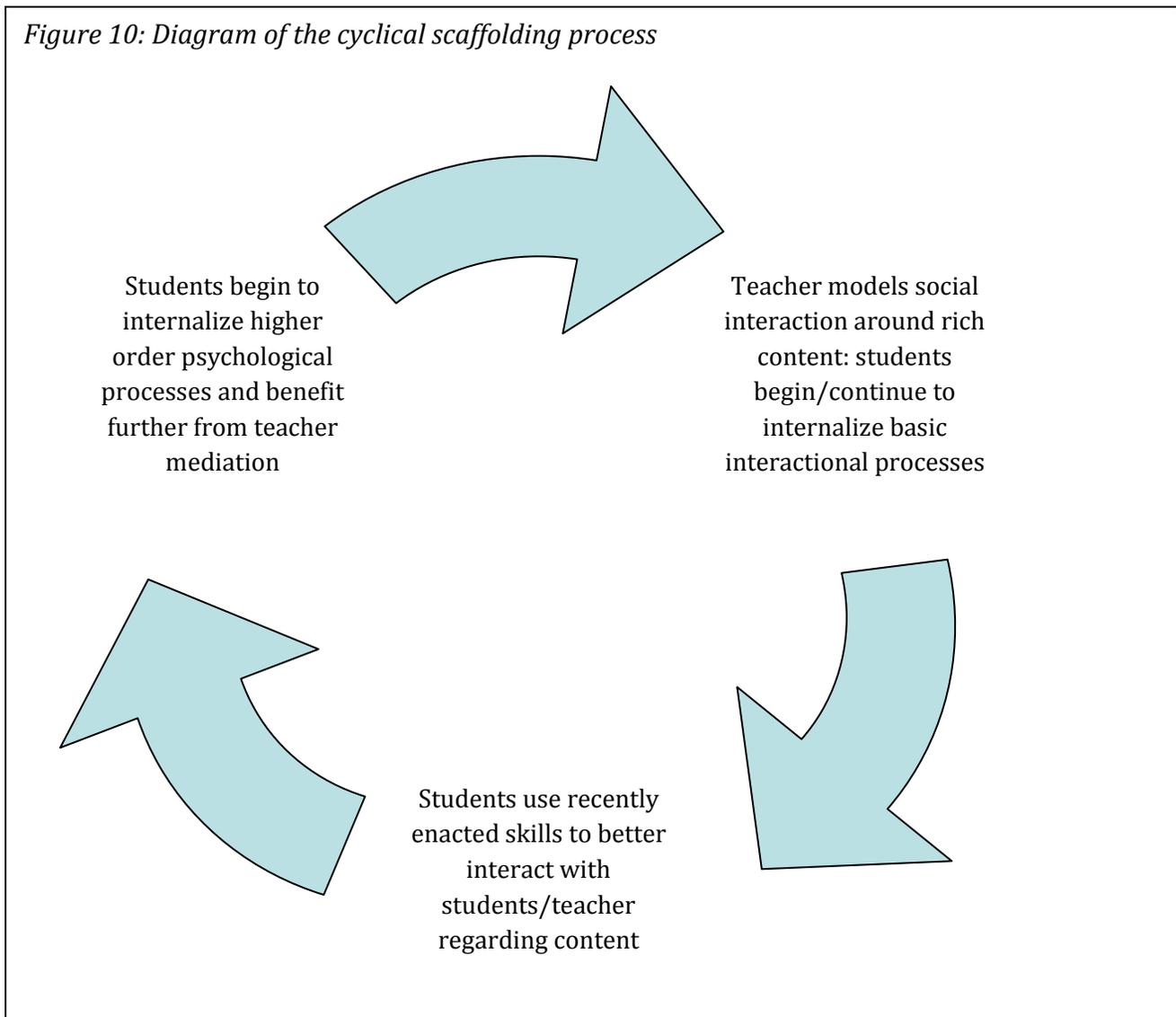
Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, and Morgan (2008) recently wrote about the reciprocal interaction that occurs in classrooms for students with EBD. They explained, "The academic and behavioral challenges presented by students with EBD affect the nature of their interactions with their teachers" (Sutherland et al., 2008, p.226). Sutherland et al., describe how students who exhibit behavioral problems in the classroom influence their teacher to then interact with them negatively which in turn affects the students' behavior. Teachers of students with EBD can influence this negative cycle by explicitly teaching their students to interact with others. One method of accomplishing this would be to facilitate classroom conversations and restoring their students' ability to profit/trust interaction so those students may internalize the processes for interaction. Through new interactional processes, the students would then have more access to new knowledge and skills. They could then utilize these new skills to interact more productively with those around them during instruction.

In summary, instruction for students with EBD would begin with an emphasis on learning the basic skills regarding the social interaction processes so that the students could benefit from future scaffolding of rich conceptual content. This process becomes cyclical (See Figure 10, below) because as the students are more able to interact functionally with their teachers and peers, they are more able to internalize new ideas and then apply those ideas to more complex interactions that would then in turn lead to new higher order knowledge.

Through the utilization of interactional mediation, teachers of students with

EBD would develop students' social skills as well as develop cognitively and academically during instruction. In educational applications, scaffolding is sometimes referred to as apprenticeship (Englert et al., 2006); in the apprenticeship model, students take an increasing role in their own learning through successive interactions with their teacher.

Figure 10: Diagram of the cyclical scaffolding process

Students begin to internalize higher order psychological processes and benefit further from teacher mediation

Teacher models social interaction around rich content: students begin/continue to internalize basic interactional processes

Students use recently enacted skills to better interact with students/teacher regarding content

This apprenticeship model allows the teacher to be sure to withdraw support

at the level of need of the student—a crucial factor for students with EBD—and allows the student to take more personal responsibility for their learning as they are able. The students are then able to profit from subsequent apprenticeship interactions. The apprenticeship that occurs during mediation with one student can also help to develop the social skills of other students in the classroom environment. As the students become more skilled at interacting, there are more opportunities to develop higher order processes because the students' combined subsequent interactions are more meaningful.

In my study, I witnessed isolated examples of student success through scaffolding by a teacher. For example, in Ms. Murphy's classroom during the individualized instruction participation structure, Carl benefitted from Ms. Murphy's guidance regarding editing his final draft of the fairytale. I also observed when students were not successful because of the lack of mediation by the teacher; for instance, in Ms. Bennett's classroom, students were often not engaged with their assignments.

Crucial importance of community of learners. An additional crucial aspect of Vygotsky's theory involves the idea of instruction occurring in a community of learners; this tenet of his theory cannot be understated. The quality of new knowledge that is internalized by learners is directly related to the quality of social interactions in which new knowledge is first perceived. Therefore, when teachers facilitate a true community atmosphere in their classrooms, they improve the quality of interactions between their students and in turn, the knowledge acquired

by those students. Stone (1993) discussed the significant emotional dimension of the social interactions in which knowledge occurs. Stone (1993) highlighted the responsibility of the more knowledgeable other in not only instructional terms but in emotional terms, by stating that it is important for scaffolding and mediated interactions to occur within positive relationships . In other words, teachers have some responsibility to nurture and model caring relationships within their classrooms/learning communities in order to optimize the learning potential of their students.

Theoretically, the implications of classrooms that incorporate a community of learners for students with emotional and behavior disorders are great. Students with EBD often have difficulties with emotional regulation and building relationships as part of their disability (Lane et al., 2002). The concept of a community of learners and the nurturance provided by the teacher in such a community would actually work toward development of students' underlying emotional disabilities. Furthermore, as stated above, in a community of learners, the teacher has some responsibility to develop relationships with his/her students which in turn can help the students to trust and attend to instruction and scaffolding provided by their teacher.

In my study, both Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett did not foster a community of learners within their classroom and many of the students were not engaged in the tasks they were assigned. Without the perception of trusting and caring relationships, the students were not able to fully profit from the instruction

provided in their classrooms. The stifled interaction patterns in both classrooms limited students' ability to interact in pro-social ways with classmates or have positive interactions modeled by teachers.

Pedagogical Implications

Despite the limited use of scaffolding, contextualized activities, and community of learners with students with emotional and behavior disorders, these tenets have informed effective practice in special education with other groups of students (Englert et al., 2006; Englert & Mariage, 1996; Palincsar, 1993). I believe that they can also inform the field of emotional and behavior disorders (EBD).

Furthermore, because students identified with EBD are afforded a free and appropriate education under the law (U. S. Department of Education, 2006), public education has an obligation to meet the social-emotional needs of students at the same time that their academic needs are being met. Despite the inclusion of instructional recommendations for academic needs within textbooks for students with EBD, academic and social/emotional needs are still treated as separate theoretically.

I propose literacy education for adolescent students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBD) that addresses both these students' social-emotional needs and their academic literacy needs concurrently. By allowing structured, mediated social interactions in their classrooms, special education teachers can model appropriate social skills for their students and at the same time give their students opportunities to learn mediating linguistic skills. In this way, the students

will potentially have more access to rich conceptual content in future discussions because they will be better able to interact with others and internalize the product of those interactions.

In their study, Regan, Mastropieri, & Scruggs (2005) proposed dialogue journals for elementary students with EBD to assist with both the students' emotional difficulties as well as develop the students' writing abilities. Instruction that uses the tenets of socio-cultural theory not only benefits the students' social-emotional difficulties and provides instruction in literacy but it also takes the next step by assisting students to develop social skills to profit more significantly from future interactions. Often students with EBD are not willing to write down their feelings about situations or reflect on the past. However, if a teacher mediates conversations on non-personal topics in a language-arts class, students will have more opportunities to develop their ideas and thoughts into language and therefore develop the ability to dialogue internally. This ability will provide that student mediating support for reflecting on future situations that are personal.

In my study, both teachers stated that they wanted to allow interactions between themselves and the students but their instructional practices did not meet their own expectations. Despite the opportunities for mediated interactions, both teachers fell short of offering true mediation. The behavior of their students and the lack of social skills and mediation of emotion seemed to influence these teachers to put more constraints on the interaction they allowed in their classrooms. However, I hypothesize that by making a goal to first and foremost develop productive

interactions and deeper conversations with their students, the teachers would

eventually be able to mediate true social interactions with their students. By putting

forth effort to the process of the social interactions between students and teacher in

the beginning, students would first learn to be engaged in instruction, learn crucial

social skills that students with EBD are often lacking, and then within several weeks

begin to internalize the content as well and expand on their existing literacy skills.

In the case of the two teachers in this study, they were focused on the products of

instruction instead of the process probably because they were at a loss with how to

engage their students without their classrooms erupting into behavioral chaos.

Teachers of students with EBD cannot implement changes in their literacy

instruction by themselves. As hinted to in the classroom vignettes above, teachers of

students with EBD have many variables to deal with while providing instruction.

They must meet varying academic levels of their students, meet content

requirements through lesson-planning and instruction, deal with behavioral

difficulties all while not having grade-level or content-specific colleagues with

whom to collaborate. It would be understandable if either of the teachers in my

study stopped providing instruction altogether and fell back on worksheets for their

students because there was such limited support for their own instructional and

emotional needs due to their isolation from the rest of the school. For teachers of

students with EBD in self-contained classrooms the opportunity to reflect on

practice or to interact with colleagues is limited. It is for these reasons that the field

of emotional and behavior disorders should make a more practical effort at specific

mentoring practices and support for teachers of students with EBD. Those mentors should have specific experience with this population and should be available on a daily basis. It would also be beneficial if teachers of students with EBD could be paired in some way so that even though they are not at the same school, they would have the opportunity to meet and confer regularly. This would be better implemented if the time and place for meetings were pre-arranged and convenient for the teachers; also, the meetings should be built in to the teachers' weekly schedules.

School districts sometimes provide collegial opportunities for special education teachers, but often these meetings have agendas that are pre-determined by district officials and do not necessarily meet the immediate and/or current needs of the teachers. Teachers of students with EBD need the ability to have conversations with other teachers within a true community of learners.

The possible benefits of instruction that uses mediated social interactions, contextualized activities and a community of learners to students' emotional, social and academic development is important not only for the students themselves but for broader society as well. Students who are able to interact with others pro-socially are better able to meet their own needs and therefore have a better chance at being independent, productive members of society (Walker, Ramsey and Gresham, 2004). Also, students who receive the social and emotional interventions that they require as young adults will be less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as substance abuse and criminal activity as adults (Walker et. al, 2004).

Limitations

There are many limitations inherent in my study; these include limitations regarding the amount and quality of data collected, the number of subjects included in the study, and the generalizability of the results. A major limitation is that I only spent three months in the two classrooms instead of an entire school year. By spending a whole school year observing in the classrooms, I could have gotten a clear view of how much these two teachers actually practiced what they professed to believe regarding instruction; the current results are only a glimpse into that. Also, the observation data I collected was only in the form of transcribed observational notes; if I had videotaped the observations, I could have checked my notes to the actual activities to further triangulate my data.

Furthermore, I was only able to collect a few artifacts from the teachers in the form of worksheets; I could have also collected copies of the teachers' lesson plans to accurately depict the assignments for each observational session.

Another limitation related to the data I collected was the few follow-up teacher interview questions regarding my observational data. It would have been helpful to have asked the teachers questions specifically about using social interaction and apprenticeship within their instruction making my biases regarding socio-cultural theory more explicit for the teachers. These questions would have given the teachers more of an opportunity to explain why they did or did not utilize instruction in the presence of a community of learners and contextualized activities.

Furthermore, I should have been more open with the teachers that I had a bias toward using social interaction during instruction.

There is also a limitation regarding the subjects I sought for the study. If I had chosen teachers who were licensed specifically in the area of emotional and behavioral disorders, rather than the generalist endorsement in mild to moderate disabilities, I might have observed instruction that was more focused on the needs of that population of students. In addition, I could have included the students as subjects to directly gauge their perspective regarding literacy instruction.

Finally, the results of my study are not generalizable in any way; they are only presented as a window into the experiences of two specific teachers working in this unique situation of teaching adolescent students with emotional and behavior disorders. Although the results might stimulate dialogue and further research about the lived experiences of teachers in these situations, there is no way to generalize my results to most or all teachers in these situations.

Future Directions

I envision many studies to follow-up the present study. Studies are needed that investigate social interactions among students and the teachers in their classrooms. Teachers of students with EBD could be taught literacy strategies/techniques that use the tenets of social interaction and contextualized activities. Afterwards, those teachers would be given the opportunity to use those skills while the activities are observed; mentoring of the teachers would occur during the process. Both qualitative and quantitative results could be reported to

determine both the quality of the social interactions and the academic benefits in specific skills.

The use of mediated social interactions regarding literacy instruction in content areas would be beneficial as well. Adolescent students who have emotional and behavioral disorders and receive their education in segregated settings have less opportunity to receive instruction from teachers with a background in all of the content areas such as science, math, and social studies. Studies that explore co-teaching between special education teachers and content area teachers could be beneficial for students with EBD.

Furthermore, trends should be investigated that look at what teachers of students with EBD deal with in terms of number of students, varying levels of students, amount of resources allocated, severity of behaviors of students. Based on the above data from Ms. Murphy and Ms. Bennett's classrooms, it could be hypothesized that the already challenging task of instructing adolescents with special needs in the area of emotional/behavioral disorders might make it more difficult for teachers to fully realize the practices they believe to be best for instructional purposes. Gathering more information regarding the state of education of adolescents with EBD could enable school districts to provide adequate resources to teachers of students with EBD so they are better able to provide quality instruction to their students.

It could also be hypothesized that whether teachers allow social interaction in their self-contained classrooms depends on the experience and background

knowledge of the teachers. The teachers in the present study did not have fully developed beliefs regarding the tenets of socio-cultural theory and that fact could have influenced their decisions to disallow social interaction in their classrooms. Investigating trends regarding the training and education of teachers in these settings could provide further insight into barriers to implementing practices that utilize mediated social interactions and learning communities.

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