

Dig Deeper: Utilizing Dialogic Teaching to Help Contemporary Students Engage with  
Historical Literature

by

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A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF EDUCATION

In the area of Language and Literacy  
in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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## Abstract

This project investigated how dialogic teaching can be used to help contemporary middle years' students more effectively engage with historical literature. Dialogic classrooms are spaces where discussion is valued as an instructional tool to help students develop deeper understandings through the co-creation of knowledge by all participants. In this project, I review the current research, and provide a detailed explanation of the six key characteristics of a dialogic classroom: questioning, exploratory talk and interthinking, co-construction of knowledge, uptake, valuing silence, and student accountability. Additionally, the project contains an instructional unit for Grade 8 English Language Arts entitled *Perspectives*. The unit is designed to teach students the fundamental dialogic discussion skills they will need to actively participate in a dialogic classroom as well as to provide them with numerous opportunities to engage in dialogic learning. Finally, the reflection section examines my personal and professional journey through graduate studies that has led to the creation of this project and explains the theoretical basis for my unit.

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## **Acknowledgments**

I wish to acknowledge the incredible team of people who helped make the completion of this project and my MEd degree possible. First I would like to thank my parents for their constant support and encouragement. To my mom who has shown me everyday what an amazing educator should be and who truly embodies a life-long learner and to my dad who always told me that no amount of education, not a single class, is ever a waste. Next I would like to thank my husband Bennett, who supported me through this entire journey and listened to me talk endlessly about educational theories and practices that I know he did not understand. Whether I was babbling out of excitement or complaining out of frustration, he listened and assured me I could complete this project. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my Middle Years Language and Literacy cohort members. This journey has been made so much richer through our discussions, debates and shared experiences. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Deborah Begoray and Dr. Sylvia Pantaleo. I want to thank you both for sharing your wisdom and your passion for education as well as for your encouragement and support throughout the last two years.

## **Dedication**

This project is dedicated to the children who inspire me – those who pass through my classroom during the day and the one I come home to at night. Cohen, you remind me everyday how exciting it is to learn.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

George R.R. Martin, the author of the hugely popular *A Song of Ice and Fire* (2011b) series wrote “A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies... The man who never reads lives only one” (Martin, 2011a, p. 452). This series has sold more than 24 million copies in North America alone (Grover, 2013) and as the world anxiously awaits the release of the next book those numbers will only continue to grow. So what makes this series so popular? One of the reasons is that these books allow the reader to dive into a fantasy world and live there with its characters, excitement and drama for a little while. *A Song of Ice and Fire* (2011b) may be meant for an adult audience, but it is this same experience that teachers of middle years English Language Arts want their students to have. I want my students to travel to Germany or Lithuania, to become a spy in WWII or a girl hiding from persecution. I want them “to live a thousand lives” through the books they read. However, I am often faced with apathy, resistance, or the students’ desire to just get the basic requirements finished. The question I am constantly asking myself is how can I get my students away from these mindsets and toward a place where they can truly engage with the numerous, amazing books available to them?

As adult readers, when we read a great book, we cannot wait to recommend it to someone else so that we can tell her how good it is and then, once she has read it, to talk about it with her. As a member of both social and professional book clubs, I have discovered that through these discussions, I find myself realizing things about the books that I had never thought of before. How often do we focus our instruction on skills that will allow our students to do the same? This question is the one I asked myself when I

was first introduced to the research on dialogic teaching and learning by Dr. Sylvia Pantaleo during her course Language Processes in the School Curriculum: Oracy in 2013. The more I read, the more I realized that this concept, this shift in how we structure our classrooms, could be what helps us bridge this disconnect. As a result, this project focuses on how dialogic teaching and learning can engage contemporary students with historical literature. Historical literature, whether fiction or non-fiction, can be difficult to read, not because the text is inaccessible, but because the themes are deeper, often darker, than students of this age may be used to reading. Historical literature also presents the challenge of asking students to see past the surface differences, such as time and place, between themselves and the characters to discover the values and experiences they have in common (Hseih, 2012). Engaging with texts that have these darker themes and extra challenges requires deeper thinking and higher-order thinking skills (Adler, Roughton, Kaiser & Caughlan, 2004; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013).

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of dialogic teaching and examine the reasons for the need to implement it in our classrooms by discussing how current, common practice is not meeting the needs of our students and in fact may be contributing to the decline in student engagement at the middle years level (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lewis, Huebner, Malone, & Valois, 2011; Marks, 2000; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). Next I provide an overview of this project, which includes introducing the *Perspectives* unit I have designed to help demonstrate how dialogic teaching practices can be implemented in a middle years English Language Arts classroom.

### **What is Dialogic Teaching?**

While a more detailed explanation and description of dialogic teaching is fleshed out in Chapter 2, at its core, dialogic teaching is a teaching stance that encourages students to create new understandings through discussion (Boyd, 2012; Fisher, 2010; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Smagorinsky, 2013). In a dialogic classroom, teachers move away from the expectation that students will always use *final draft speech* when participating in class discussions which requires that the ideas be fully formed, thought through and articulated according to the rules of proper grammar (Smagorinsky, 2013). Instead, teachers help students to understand that talk can be exploratory (Barnes, 2008) and that sharing the start of an idea out loud, before fully finishing it, can lead to new and different understandings.

Exploratory forms of language are most commonly discussed in the process of teaching writing (Barnes, 2008; Smagorinsky, 2013). We encourage students to start a writing project by brainstorming, drawing mind maps, doing turn-and-talk, and a plethora of other activities to get the ideas flowing and to create a rough draft. Then, students take the start of their idea to others, both classmates and teacher, for input. Students continue through several other stages before the teacher expects to see a completed, polished piece of writing – a final draft. The basic idea of the dialogic classroom is to take this process and apply it to discussion. We teach students to start by sharing an idea out loud, model how to give feedback, offer ideas through the characteristics of good discussion, and allow that the end result will be a co-creation of knowledge by everyone who participates (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013). While this structure is one that classrooms should be adopting, unfortunately it is not one that has been traditionally used.

### **What is Wrong With “What We’ve Always Done”?**

The students coming into our classrooms today need instructional approaches that will assist their use of language in the modern world. Over 40 years ago, Halliday (1969) observed that “much of what has recently been objected to, among the attitudes and approaches to language that are current in the profession, arouses criticism not so much because it is false as because it is irrelevant” (p.27). Educational reforms generally come from new understandings about how students learn best. Reform does not mean that what we have been doing in the past was always wrong, or no longer true, but that it has become at least partly irrelevant in the face of new research. As I encounter new ways of knowing and my learning grows, I always have this little voice in the back of my mind, the voice of the seasoned teacher, who argues that this new way is just the next new fad and I should just wait it out until it disappears. While, unfortunately, there is some truth to this argument, it is in the way we often choose to implement these new learnings, not in the learnings themselves, which stops them from being sustainable. The examination of the use of technology in classrooms is a good example. Since studies show that implementing technology in the classroom increases student engagement (International Reading Association, 2009; Jewitt, 2008; New London Group, 1996), many educators may completely change their practice and teach using only technology, eliminating any practice that they were using previously. However, the point of the research is that we need to incorporate more technology not that we need to eliminate everything else. I think it is incredibly important to realize that practices often change because now we know better, which does not devalue past practices. One of the things we know better now is that researchers exploring dialogic teaching and learning (Reznitskaya, 2012;

Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Wilkinson & Son Hye, 2011) provide evidence that dialogic practices better engage students and that they can help students think more deeply about classroom material. This evidence does not mean teachers should abandon all previous practices, but that they need to implement more dialogic teaching practices that will help students be more engaged with historical literature.

### **Decline in Student Engagement**

Overwhelmingly, findings from research show that student engagement decreases as the grade level increases (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lewis et al, 2011; Marks, 2000; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). This decrease may be due to the fact that engagement is influenced by factors outside the current classroom such as lack of life satisfaction and/or past success in school (Lewis et al, 2011; Marks, 2000).

While lack of past success can be a factor in any aspect of a child's education, and since my focus is on dialogic teaching and learning, I draw on Smagorinsky's (2013) example of the student speaking in class who is frequently corrected because of his use of English. This student learns to associate speaking in class with feelings of shame and embarrassment and these feelings lead to the student disengaging from conversations that could contribute to his/her understanding of curriculum content (Smagorinsky, 2013). As the student continues to withdraw, and begins missing more and more of the learning that takes place by engaging in these conversations, other people start to view this student as lacking in intelligence. This belief in turn affects how these other people engage with this student, sending him messages that he is inferior which leads to *dysphoria*: feelings of inferiority based on how one is treated by others (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 195).

Since teacher modeling is a major contributing factor to student engagement (Fisher & Frey, 2012, O’Connell Schmakel, 2008) this particular student’s experience could be much better if the teacher modelled accepting behaviour of the student’s speech instead of engaging in corrective behaviour. Asking students to engage in authentic dialogue in the classroom leads to further engagement (Marks, 2000; O’Connell Schmakel, 2008). In order for this process to occur, teachers need to move away from requiring students to only use “final draft speech” (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 193) or they may inadvertently create more students who experience dysphoria about their speaking skills than engaged learners. The teacher resource in Chapter 3 offers some suggestions as to how teachers can make this move away from requiring ‘final draft speech’.

### **The *Perspectives* Unit**

The unit is a 9-week book club unit for Grade 8 English Language Arts that centers around five works of historical literature: *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank (1993), *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys (2012), *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyn (2008), *The Boy Who Dared* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (2008), and *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli (2003). Throughout the unit, the books are introduced and studied using dialogic teaching approaches in order to meet several of the prescribed learning outcomes from the English Language Arts Grade 8 Curriculum (2008), which will be outlined in Chapter 3.

I chose these five books for several reasons. The first, and most basic, reason is that they are all set during WWII and deal with similar issues of that time period which means they work well when studied concurrently in a book club setting. I also chose these particular books out of the many set during WWII because these texts are all award

winning works of literature. Thirdly, these books represent a variety of interests, reading levels and styles, which allows for more authentic student choice.

The final reason for selecting these particular novels is that, when studied together, they present a deep and complex picture of the events during WWII. The novels are all told from different perspectives even though they deal with the same central themes – hope, loss, and identity. *Anne Frank* and *Between Shades of Gray* focus on the struggle of those being persecuted and sent to labour camps. In contrast, a boy whose father runs the concentration camp narrates *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and a boy who starts out idolizing the Nazi soldiers narrates *Milkweed*. No matter the perspective or point of view the novel is told from, each text deals not only with similar events, but also with the same themes of hope, loss and identity. These themes are common to all five novels, but come across drastically different in each one. The unit is designed so students will utilize the dialogic learning tools they will be taught at the beginning of the unit to study their own novel in small groups and move toward comparing these major themes in the different novels in a whole class setting. By engaging students in these deeper understandings, I believe I have a better chance of improving their overall engagement and therefore their overall comprehension (Fisher & Frey, 2012).

### **Project Overview**

In Chapter 1 I have presented reasons for the need to change the way talk is utilized in many middle years classrooms and offered suggestions about how this change can be made. In Chapter 2, the literature review, I outline the theoretical framework that supports dialogic teaching practices, review primary and secondary research that investigated the components of a dialogic classroom, and provide an explanation of what

a dialogic classroom looks like from a teaching perspective and a learning perspective. In Chapter 3, the *Perspectives* instructional unit, I provide a detailed and thorough teaching resource with the intention that it could be taken and taught as it is, lesson by lesson with all the necessary resources provided. In the final chapter I include my personal and academic reflections on the process of not only completing this project, but also on working through all of the components of completing a Master of Education degree. I examine how this process has influenced my teaching practice and how it will continue to influence me moving forward with respect to how I approach my planning and teaching.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a review of the primary and secondary research that supports engaging contemporary students with historical literature through the creation of a dialogic classroom. The chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section I describe the key foundational theoretical frameworks that serve as a foundation. In the second section I examine the research on dialogic teaching and learning as it pertains to helping students engage with historical texts. The second section is subdivided into segments that address student engagement, the definition of a dialogic classroom, the characteristics of a dialogic classroom, and the nature of dialogic teaching and dialogic learning.

#### Theoretical Frameworks

My argument for creating a dialogic classroom to help contemporary students engage with historical literature has its basis in three major theoretical frameworks- Gee's discourse/Discourse theory (1989), Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (1986, 1994a, 1994b) and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (1978).

#### **Gee.**

James Gee (1989) proposed that the discussion of language and literacy practices should actually be a focus on social practices. He argues that 'language' itself is a misleading term because it is often associated with simply using proper grammar, meaning that a person uses proper word choice, sentence structure and syntax.

According to Gee however, grammar is only a tiny piece of everything that needs to be considered in the discussion of language and literacy practices; a consideration that

includes the context in which the language is being used; a context that will influence what is actually considered proper- and by whom. To address this consideration, Gee proposes the theory of discourse/Discourse.

According to Gee (1989), small 'd' discourse means "connected stretches of language that make sense" (p. 6). Capital 'D' Discourse however is more complex. In this definition of Discourse, it is not the grammar or language that is important, but "saying-[writing]-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations" (Gee, 1989, p. 6). While 'discourse' is part of 'Discourse', it is only one part. Gee suggests that a person has more than one Discourse and that, more than just ways of speaking and writing, these Discourses are "ways of being in the world" (Gee, 1989, p. 6) that include body language, beliefs, ideas, fashion, and attitudes.

The implications of this theory for the dialogic classroom are most evident in Gee's explanation of primary and secondary Discourses. A person's primary Discourse is the one first learned and used to understand the world. An individual learns this Discourse not by being taught, but by being a member of a particular group (e.g. family, tribe) and as a result, primary Discourses vary greatly between different social and cultural groups. Secondary Discourses are any Discourses acquired after the primary Discourse and they enable access to different social institutions – such as school. The problem that arises, however is the conflict between a person's primary and secondary Discourses and, according to Gee (1989), this conflict can make acquiring the desired secondary Discourse much more difficult.

Traditionally, schools have been structured around the Discourse of a dominant group, "the middle-class mainstream" (Gee, 1989, p. 11). This dominant group then

tests the fluency of this particular Discourse in students to establish the ‘fluent users’ and to exclude the ‘non-natives’ of this dominant Discourse (Gee, 1989). Teachers can see this theory enacted in the everyday language they use: for example struggling readers, English as a Second Language learners, and gifted students. These terms and ideas are based on each student’s ability to demonstrate mastery of the school Discourse and the student who fails to do so is labeled as ‘other’ by his/her teachers. These ways of determining belonging are not present only in the teacher’s assessment of students’ reading and writing abilities, but also in the body language that teachers expect as well, since, as previously mentioned, all of these aspects are part of Discourse. The middle-class mainstream Discourse dictates, for example, that a good listener sits quietly, sits still and makes eye contact. If a child comes from a primary Discourse where looking an elder in the eye is seen as disrespectful (e.g., some Aboriginal cultures), this gesture becomes a “gate” (Gee, 1989, p. 8) that excludes him/her from becoming fluent in the dominant Discourse required to be successful in a Western school setting.

Gee’s discourse/Discourse theory has major implications for a dialogic classroom because it is exactly these ‘gates’ that a teacher trying to create a dialogic classroom tries to eliminate. There are two ways that Gee’s theory supports the practices of a dialogic classroom. While Gee argues that Discourses cannot be overtly taught, Cazden (1988) and Heath (1983) suggest students can master a new Discourse by “enculturation into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse” (as cited in Gee, 1989, p. 7). Thus teachers can use scaffolding and modeling to teach students some of the skills they need to be successful

in the Discourse of school. Some examples of how teachers can accomplish this scaffolding and modeling are described in my unit in Chapter 3.

The second application of this theory in a dialogic classroom is that when an individual has mastered a Discourse, he/she is not generally aware of its details and practices. However, by presenting an individual with a situation that challenges his/her primary Discourse he/she becomes much more aware of what he/she can do versus what he/she is being asked to do (Gee, 1989). According to Gee (1989), “when we have really mastered anything...we have little or no conscious awareness of it” (p.12), but being placed into a situation that challenges that mastery requires a more conscious awareness of the skills being utilized on a regular basis. The teacher in a dialogic classroom treats these differences as something to be celebrated and encouraged, a way to open the conversation for students about their meta-knowledge so that they can better understand their primary Discourse.

Gee’s theory of discourse/Discourse conveys very clearly that each student comes into a classroom with a set of skills, experiences, ways of speaking, ways of acting, beliefs and values. Creating a dialogic classroom enables students to celebrate what they bring to the classroom, while giving them opportunities to add new Discourses. The recognition and celebration of what each student brings to the classroom is one of the foundational tenets of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory.

### **Rosenblatt’s transactional theory.**

Louise Rosenblatt’s (1986) transactional theory was based on John Dewey’s scientific use of the term transactional that defined human beings’ relationship with the natural environment “to indicate a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship in which the

elements or parts are aspects or phases of a total situation or event” (pp. 122-123).

Dewey’s recognition of this idea and use of this term was a shift away from early thinking that human beings existed separate from nature (Rosenblatt, 1986). Rosenblatt’s use of the term in her transactional theory of reading and writing was based on the same basic principle – a shift away from viewing the text and the reader as separate and instead recognizing the relationship between the two as a reciprocal relationship.

Rosenblatt argued that all linguistic activities are transactional and that, as is evident in Gee’s discourse/Discourse theory (1989), each person comes to the linguistic event with an individual history and understanding that will influence how he/she experiences the event (Rosenblatt, 1986, 1994b). Rosenblatt (1986, 1994b) stated that every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. Rosenblatt postulated that knowledge is generated as a result of the transaction between a particular reader, with a particular text, at a particular moment. The “meaning” was not waiting in the text to be found, or in the reader for that matter, but that it came “into being during the transaction between reader and text” (Rosenblatt, 1994b, p. 1063).

This idea lead to Rosenblatt’s discussion of the problem with validity of interpretation. Just because, she argued, there is no ‘right’ answer does not mean that that anything goes and any response is equally valid. She proposed that, “by agreeing on criteria of evaluation of interpretations, we can accept the possibility of alternative interpretations, yet decide that some are more acceptable than others” (Rosenblatt, 1994b, p. 1078).

Another fundamental aspect of the reading transaction was the reader's stance on the efferent-aesthetic continuum when she approached a text (Rosenblatt, 1994b). Efferent reading refers to the type of reading one does with the purpose of taking away information to be used after the reading is finished. Aesthetic reading on the other hand is done with the purpose of focusing on the reading event itself. A reader approaching a text from an aesthetic stance "pays attention to, savors, the qualities of the feelings, ideas, situations, scenes, personalities, and emotions that are called forth" (Rosenblatt, 1994b, p. 1067). Through the aesthetic stance, the reader is not an unbiased observer of the text but "participates in the tensions, conflicts, and resolutions of the images, ideas, and scenes as they unfold" (Rosenblatt, 1994b, p. 1067). The meaning the reader creates through this experience, this "lived-through meaning" (Rosenblatt, 1994b, p. 1067) becomes the subject of the reader's response, not simply the text itself. According to Rosenblatt (1994b), any text can be efferent or aesthetic depending on the approach of the individual reader. The problem with how literature has traditionally been taught, according to Rosenblatt (1986), is that this efferent/aesthetic continuum is not understood. Unfortunately, the traditional structure of schools has forced many students to understand that all in-school reading should be approached from an efferent stance; that students read in order to complete an activity that requires basic recall of what was read and not to engage for example with the personal messages present and, as is addressed later in this chapter, the promotion of efferent stance may reduce student's engagement in reading. The Russian researcher Vygotsky also wrote about the connection between the reader's thoughts and emotions on the meaning of a text.

**Vygotsky.**

Like Rosenblatt, Lev Vygotsky (1978) addressed the idea that learning is transactional. According to Smagorinsky (2013), much of Vygotsky's doctoral dissertation discusses how art produces "emotional responses in readers, listeners, and viewers that profoundly affect[s] them" (p. 195) and, as a result, "a person does not simply think about art, or respond emotionally to it, but has emotional reactions that, when reflected upon, enable a person to consider more profoundly the depths of the human experience" (p. 195). Similar to Rosenblatt's theory, Vygotsky argued that cognition and affect are interwoven and that "how we think and how we feel cannot be separated (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 195).

Vygotsky (1978) argued that all learning, not just interactions with text, is social. According to this social constructivist view, learning is an active process during which the learner constructs knowledge through dialogic interactions with the environment, with themselves, and with others (Almasi & Garas-York, 2009; Smagorinsky, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). This view, like Gee's and Rosenblatt's theories, respects the fact that each learner brings with him or her a unique set of cultural, historical and institutional experiences that affect the construction of knowledge (Wertsch, 1985 as cited in Almasi & Garas-York, 2009). These experiences, these interactions with the environment, are one of the factors influencing the construction of knowledge.

A second influence is the internal dialogue of the learner. According to Smagorinsky (2007), when Vygotsky (1978) argued that all learning is social he was not arguing that students need to work in small groups at all times. Instead, Smagorinsky (2007) contends that Vygotsky was stating that, even when a person is alone, his or her

thinking consists of a type of dialogue and that it is this internal dialogue that helps to shape the way a person views the world and affects the way a person interacts with the environment. Therefore, according to the social constructivist view, a person's internal dialogue shapes how he or she interacts with his or her environment and the result of that interaction then in turn influences his or her internal dialogue (Almasi & Garas-York, 2009; Smagorinsky, 2007; 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

The third influence on the construction of knowledge is the learner's dialogue with others. While stating that all learning is social, Vygotsky (1978) does not, as Smagorinsky (2013) pointed out, mean that students need to work in small groups all the time. It does however require that students need to be active participants in authentic dialogic situations (Wells, 1986). Theoretically, teaching from a dialogic stance is situated in sociocultural theories because "social learning environments enable learners to observe and interact with more knowledgeable others as they engage in cognitive processes they may not be able to engage in independently" (Almasi & Garas-York, 2009, p. 471). Vygotsky (1978) argued that in school this learning process should involve a dialogue between an individual's personal experience outside of school and what he/she is learning in school (Gee, 1989; Smagorinsky, 2013). By encouraging and enabling students to make connections between their in-school learning and their out-of-school knowledge, teachers can help increase student engagement as they strive to create a dialogic classroom (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Marks, 2000; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008).

### **Student Engagement**

Alexander and Fox (2008) argue that students need to be actively engaged with a text in order to truly comprehend it and refer to the present time as the era of engaged

learning in the classroom. This idea is not a new concept and has, in fact, dominated the conversation on best instructional practices for the better part of the last 15 years (Alexander & Fox, 2008). Engaging students through dialogic teaching practices is not a new concept either. Rather, the effect classroom language has on students' success has been studied for decades (Cazden, 2001; Halliday, 1969; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wilkinson & Son Hye, 2011).

The research on student engagement at the middle years level is fairly extensive. Much of this research shows that the practices that are engaging for middle years' students are the same as the basic principles of a dialogic classroom: asking students to engage in authentic dialogue (Marks, 2000; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008), teaching through inquiry-based instruction by allowing students to ask their own questions (Fisher & Frey, 2012), and allowing students to make choices for themselves so they feel responsible for their own learning (Marks, 2000; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008).

According to Zmuda (2008) "too many students have become compliant workers who simply follow directions and finish the necessary paperwork on time" (p. 38). Freire (1970) referred to this kind of schooling as "banking education" in which students' only job is to receive the information, memorize and repeat (as cited in Brown, 2011, p. 3). This approach is not conducive to creating engaged students or citizens and prompts the need for educators to re-evaluate how they define success in contemporary classrooms (Brown, 2011; Zmuda, 2008).

A study by Hall (2007) illustrated this need for reconsideration of the definition of success by examining how middle school readers, both struggling and successful, consciously used silence in the classroom. Hall (2007) utilized a descriptive case-study

approach to document the ways in which the students worked with text in the classroom and the rationales that guided their observed behaviours. The data on observed behaviours was collected on three students, with varying levels of reading success, from three different middle schools in suburban areas outside of medium-sized Midwestern United States cities over the course of a school year. The readers who struggled were afraid to acknowledge that they did not understand something or that they needed extra help because they would slow down the entire class (Hall, 2007). Because of the constant pressure to cover content conveyed by the teacher, students were aware of how much work they had to do and anything that stopped that constant push was seen as disruptive (Hall, 2007).

Hall also found that even the seemingly successful reader felt similarly about perceived disruptions. The interviews with an 'A' student showed she also experienced reluctance to speak in class (Hall, 2007). In response to the emphasis from teachers that 'getting things done' is important, this student believed that success meant speed and accuracy; therefore talking in class was not valuable as it slowed down that process. While the student's grades seemed to reflect that her belief made her a successful student, the interviews indicated that this student retained very little of what she read and showed significant problems with any deeper level comprehension (Hall, 2007). The 'A' student in Hall's (2007) study is an example of a compliant learner, believing that answering the questions posed by her teacher will make her a successful student even though these behaviours lead to very little deeper level comprehension. In contrast, pedagogy in dialogic classrooms attempts to move students from being compliant learners to being engaged learners (Zmuda, 2008). Compliant learners only answer the question that the

teacher has asked while engaged learners raise their own questions, delve deeper into the thinking, or offer another point of view (Zmuda, 2008): all behaviours that are encouraged in a dialogic classroom.

### **What is a Dialogic Classroom?**

The term ‘dialogic’ is used in a number of different ways in the research (Reznitskaya, 2012; Wells & Arauz, 2006; Wilkinson & Son Hye, 2011). At times the term means simply conversation, sometimes it refers to giving students a voice, and “for some it means collaborative inquiry among teachers and students and the co-construction of knowledge and understanding through dialogue” (Wilkinson & Son Hye, 2011, p. 361). In a dialogic classroom verbal interactions are more like authentic conversations among all participants where students are not only allowed, but also encouraged, to contribute their own understandings, interpretations and experiences to the conversation (Wells & Arauz, 2006). For this project, Wilkinson and Son Hye’s definition of collaborative inquiry in combination with Wells’s and Arauz’s suggestion of authentic conversation serves as the definition of dialogic.

Boyd and Markarian (2011) argued that dialogic teaching is not so much a teaching method as an overall stance that a teacher must adopt. O’Connor and Michaels (2007) used the example of an overbearing radio talk show host to illustrate this point. If the host shouted at a caller “So you’re saying we should abandon the troops, is that what you’re saying?” (O’Connor & Michaels, 2007, p. 281), the question appears to be inviting a dialogue, but when examined in context, the stance from which the question was asked gives it an entirely different meaning. To examine this concept, Boyd and Markarian (2011) conducted a micro-analysis of classroom discourse by examining a seven minute

discussion conducted by nine-year-olds at the end of a year's participation in dialogic teaching. These students were part of a mainstream third-grade classroom in a small college town in central New York State. The researchers informally observed this class for a year and formally gathered data for three weeks in June. The data were collected through field notes, interviews with the classroom teacher, and audio- and video-tapes.

Boyd and Markarian (2011) claimed that “teaching is a chain of decision-making, and the degree to which the teacher or students get to make the decisions frames the parameters for instructional stance” (p. 516). A monologic stance was what has commonly been adopted in classrooms and creates an atmosphere where the teacher gives the information and the students listen (Boyd & Markarian, 2011). In the dialogic stance the teacher also becomes a listener while the students are given a voice. When the teacher becomes the listener he/she can gain a greater awareness of his/her students' knowledge, ideas, and questions. He/she can then use this information to guide the lessons moving forward (Boyd & Markarian, 2011). The classroom teacher created a dialogic classroom by the way he interacted with the students signalling to them that he was listening, that their voices and opinions mattered, and that what they were saying had value by “working in the moment of discussion to provide responses, questions, and comments” (Boyd & Markarian, 2011, p. 529). This message to students is the basis of teaching from a dialogic stance. The common characteristics of a dialogic classroom are outlined in the following section.

### **Characteristics of a dialogic classroom.**

To teach from a dialogic stance a teacher must convey to students in everything he/she does and says, that their voices and opinions matter (Boyd & Markarian, 2011).

This section examines several characteristics of dialogic classrooms that teachers can implement to convey this message to their students. These characteristics are teacher questioning, exploratory talk and interthinking, co-construction of knowledge, uptake and the value of silence.

### *Questioning.*

In most classrooms, the teacher generally controls any discussion. This control fits in with the historically accepted transmission mode of instruction in which teachers tell students what they should know and then test them on the content to make sure that they know it (Wells & Arauz, 2006). Traditionally, this approach takes place in the form of Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) or Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) (DeWitt & Hohenstein, 2009; Wells & Arauz, 2006). IRE occurs when the teacher asks a question or suggests a prompt (initiation), the student answers with the idea that there is a correct answer to be offered (response), and the teacher then informs the student whether his/her response was correct or not (evaluation). The first two stages of IRF are the same, with the difference being the final stage is the teacher offering more extended feedback as opposed to simply telling the student whether he/she was correct or not. While there is some variation between these two methods, they are both forms of dialogue where the teacher maintains control, authority and direction of the talk in the classroom (Cazden, 2001; Lemke, 1990; Mehan, 1979; Mortimer & Scott, 2003 as cited in DeWitt & Hohenstien, 2009).

In contrast, in dialogic classrooms questions are asked to encourage students to examine their own thoughts, and those of others; to find solutions to problems; to understand concepts on a deeper level; or to create new understandings (DeWitt &

Hohenstien, 2009; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Wells & Arauz, 2006). In these classrooms, questions are not asked to test students' recall knowledge, but rather to encourage deeper thinking in an effort to reach a richer understanding. When the purpose of the questioning has shifted, the final stage of the IRE/IRF model does have the potential to generate dialogic interactions (O'Connor & Michaels, 2007).

O'Connor and Michaels (2007) suggested restructuring the IRE/IRF model so that it is Initiation-Response-Revoicing. In the revoicing stage the student is "positioned as a thinker or theorizer, the holder of a noteworthy idea, theory, or explanation" (O'Connor & Michaels, 2007, p. 281) because the teacher replies to the student's response by rephrasing using prompts such as 'So, what you're saying is...'. The authors state that the IRR model then moves to a fourth stage where the student can judge the teacher's interpretation, instead of the other way around. This shift in the purpose of questioning also requires an increase in the variety of questions being asked in the classroom.

*Varying levels of questioning.*

Barrett (1976) presented a taxonomy of reading to classify levels of reading comprehension questions. Barrett (1976) proposes five main categories: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation and appreciation.

Table 1 outlines the levels of Barrett's taxonomy.

**Table 1: Barrett's Taxonomy of Questioning**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Questions at this level ask students to:</b>	<b>Tasks that apply to this level</b>
Literal Comprehension	recognize and recall ideas and information <b>explicitly</b> stated in the text	label, list, name, relate, recall, repeat, state
Reorganization	organize ideas and information <b>explicitly</b> stated in the text	classify, regroup, rearrange, assemble, collect, categorise

Inferential Comprehension	use ideas and information <b>explicitly</b> stated in the text to form inferences	predict, infer, guess
Evaluation	formulate a response based on an evaluative judgement	analyse, appraise, evaluate, justify, reason, criticise, judge
Appreciation	draw on all of the skills in the previous levels to compose an aesthetic and emotional response	critique, appraise, comment, appreciate

(Barrett, 1976; Hanamici, 2014; Saharudin, 2014)

It is especially important for teachers to be aware of these different levels of questioning in a dialogic classroom because questions are being asked for a different purpose. Teachers cannot continue to ask questions that only require basic recall of explicit facts from the text and expect that students will engage in discussion and deeper understanding of the text. Asking questions at these different levels is necessary for the creation of a dialogic classroom, but equally as important is teaching students how to formulate answers to these different levels of questions.

In order to help students understand how to respond to different levels of questions, Raphael (1982) suggests teachers should teach students to understand the relationship that exists between the question, the text and reader's previous knowledge. Raphael (1982) recommends that teachers can do this utilizing the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) program. This particular program teaches students three strategies they can use to find the information they need to answer questions: Right There, Think and Search, and On My Own (Raphael, 1982, p. 186).

The "Right There" strategy is used for detail specific questions for which the answer is explicitly stated in the text in one sentence. The "Think and Search" strategy also applies to questions for which the answer is explicitly stated in the text, but the information required to form a complete answer is in more than one sentence or paragraph. While the

student can still find all the information he/she needs to form a complete answer, this level of question requires some synthesizing of ideas. These two strategies can be applied to what Raphael (1982) calls thin questions as well as the first two levels of Barrett's (1976) taxonomy of questioning. The third strategy, "On My Own", is used for questions for which the answer is based in the reader's own knowledge. Utilizing this strategy requires the student to draw on his/her own knowledge, experiences, and inferences and apply them to the text in order to form an answer. This strategy can be applied to what Raphael (1982) refers to as thick questions and what Barrett (1976) refers to in the higher three levels of his taxonomy.

*Asking the questions.*

Because of the shift in purpose from testing students through their responses to encouraging deeper thinking, who is asking the questions in a dialogic classroom may also change. Since the issue is no longer one of control, questions are posed and answered by all learners in the environment whether they are teacher or student. It is in this aspect of dialogic classrooms where the influence of Rosenblatt's (1994b) transactional theory becomes obvious because the teacher respects the fact that each person comes to the reading of a text with a unique set of experiences that will affect his/her understanding and responses to the text. Assuming that just the teacher's questions and prompts are valid only values the teacher's experience and ignores the fact that her experience will be different from every one of her students.

Only when teachers acknowledge that each experience is unique and valid, and accept that these different experiences will generate different questions, can teachers expect

students to genuinely engage in a discussion on the text (Evans, 2002). This discussion of texts will be built on exploratory talk.

***Exploratory talk and interthinking.***

According to Barnes (2008), it is to be expected that most students' delivery will be "hesitant, broken, and full of dead-ends and changes of direction" (p. 4) when they are talking through a new idea. This type of talk, what students use when they are "trying out ideas", is called *exploratory talk* (Barnes, 2008, p. 4). Barnes (2008) suggests that exploratory talk is tentative and somewhat disconnected because it "enables the speaker to try out ideas, to hear how they sound, to see what others make of them, to arrange information and ideas into different patterns" (p. 4).

Traditionally, schools have required students to use only final draft speech (Smagorinsky, 2013) also referred to as presentational talk (Barnes, 2008), but according to Barnes there is a key difference between presentational and exploratory talk, making both of them necessary in education. Barnes (2008) argues that in presentational talk the speaker's purpose is to adjust his/her speech to the needs of the audience while in exploratory talk the speaker's purpose is to examine his/her own thoughts. Because these two types of talk have different purposes they also require different responses.

Presentational talk by definition is meant for an audience and therefore lends itself to evaluation but exploratory talk requires an environment where students feel comfortable sharing their unformed ideas knowing they will not be evaluated (Barnes, 2008).

Exploratory talk also serves a key function in what Mercer (2000) calls interthinking (Pantaleo, 2011).

The term interthinking was created by Mercer (2000) to explain the connection between the thinking aspect and the social interaction aspect of dialogue. Interthinking means “using talk to think collectively, to engage with others’ ideas through oral language” (Pantaleo, 2011, p. 261). Using exploratory talk in the process of interthinking can lead to the co-construction of knowledge.

***Co-construction of knowledge.***

When a classroom is truly dialogic, knowledge is collaboratively co-constructed between the students and the teacher (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013). In order for this co-construction to happen, teachers need to be willing to give up the role of “all knowing expert” (Fisher & Larkin, 2010; Lyle, 2008; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013). Instead, dialogic classrooms “feature more egalitarian social organization, with authority over the content and form of discourse shared among discussion participants” (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013, p. 122). As stated previously, questions evident of this approach are not asked by the teacher as a way to test students, but are asked by all participants as a way to open a dialogue and create a response that incorporates many different points of view. For this incorporation of different ideas to happen, it is important that students feel comfortable sharing their responses knowing that they are not giving answers to be evaluated, but rather sharing points to consider and build upon (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013).

Unfortunately, in general schools are not structured to learn from students’ voices (O’Connell Schmakel, 2008). In order for this co-construction of knowledge to happen, it is necessary that the classroom have a safe, respectful environment or culture in which all students feel comfortable sharing their voice. Findings from research reveal three

areas of engagement: behavioural, cognitive and emotional (Lewis et al., 2011) and that the strongest influence on all three types of student engagement is classroom culture (O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). O'Connell Schmakel's case study involved 67 Grade 7 students from four ethnically diverse parochial schools in the Midwestern United States. The schools were specifically selected because the teachers were in year two of a 2-year in-service for innovative teaching of early adolescents. The students' perspectives were collected through an essay writing assignment, participation in focus group discussions, and one-on-one interviews. According to the Grade 7 students, in order to be successful and engaged they needed a caring, understanding teacher who connected with them and created a classroom culture where everyone is both challenged and valued (O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). One of the ways that teachers and students can value one another's opinions is through uptake.

### ***Uptake.***

Uptake is a speaker's acknowledgement of the previous speaker's question or comment in some way and incorporating those ideas into his/her own response (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013). However, in middle school classrooms, even when students are working in small groups, they usually take turns going around the circle, each student sharing his or her own ideas, completely independent of what other students have shared (Chiaravalloti, 2010). This lack of uptake may be a reflection of students' experience with the IRE/IRF model of questioning which was examined earlier in this chapter. By utilizing the IRE/IRF models of questioning, teachers demonstrate that ideas are shared only in response to a question and that each question requires a separate, unconnected answer (DeWitt & Hohenstein, 2009; O'Connor & Michaels, 2007; Wells & Arauz,

2006). Students need to be explicitly taught how to interact with each other in order to engage in a conversation instead of just a statement of independent ideas.

Utilizing the Initiation-Response-Revoicing model (O'Connor & Michaels, 2007) explained previously in this section is one way that teachers can demonstrate uptake. After utilizing this questioning model, teachers can explicitly teach “symmetric dialogue” (Wells & Arauz, 2006) to help students further understand how to utilize uptake in a discussion. Symmetric dialogue means that the speaker is responsible for deciding what he/she will talk about and the listener is responsible for, not only hearing the speaker, but according to Rommetveit (1985) for “mak[ing] sense of what is said by temporarily adopting the speaker’s perspective” (as cited in Wells & Arauz, 2006, pp. 382-383). In the IRE/IRF approach discussed previously, teachers have in fact asked students to adopt the perspective of the teacher and generate what the teacher thinks is the correct answer which may give students a platform to understanding symmetric dialogue. In a dialogic classroom the teacher is also expected to engage in symmetric dialogue as a listener to the students. Once students have come to understand the roles and responsibilities of both parties in symmetric dialogue, then they can move to applying those skills to small group and whole class discussions. Being successful in a dialogic classroom requires that students are able to demonstrate good conversational skills like symmetric dialogue and uptake, but it also requires that all participants value a student’s choice to be silent.

***Valuing silence.***

Ollin (2008) conducted a qualitative research study in which 25 teacher participants were interviewed on their use of silence in the classroom as an instruction tool. The

study had a phenomenological approach and the data were collected by the teachers' own descriptions of what they do as opposed to researcher observation. One of the motivating factors for this research was the idea that a "cultural bias towards talk means that silence is commonly perceived negatively" (Ollin, 2008, p. 265). This perception may, in part be a result of traditional IRE/IRF questioning methods. In this model, the teacher would direct the question to a particular student and when the student did not respond, the teacher would interpret silence as a lack of understanding. As well, teachers themselves may be uncomfortable with silence because of their perception that teachers should ask students to show their understanding by talking (Ollin, 2008).

However, neither of these perspectives takes into consideration that silence can also be a deliberate choice by the student. Several teachers in Ollin's (2008) study stated that they promoted silence in their classrooms to encourage students to listen to their inner voices and to focus on the thoughts in their own minds while others identified the lack of noise as necessary sometimes for just basic concentration without interference. While pedagogical practices in a dialogic classroom gives students opportunities to talk through an idea and come to a new understanding (Smagorinsky, 2013) teachers must also understand that students can come to those new understandings through different methods.

How a student chooses to utilize silence may also be a cultural trait teachers need to be sensitive to. The demographics in North American schools are changing dramatically, but this change in the student population is not the problem - it is the way that many educators are responding to the changing racial, cultural and linguistic needs of the students that presents a problem (Brown, 2007). Culturally responsive teachers

(CRT) believe that culture deeply influences the way a student learns and as a result attempt to teach in a way that acknowledges, respects and incorporates aspects of all students' cultures, not just those of the dominant culture (Brown, 2007). As opposed to the dominant school culture that problematizes silence, some cultures view silence as a conversational trait to be valued. Irish culture, for example, values silence in a conversation as it demonstrates to the speaker that the listener is indeed listening and thinking about a response instead of just waiting for his/her turn to speak (Murphy, personal correspondence, September, 2014).

The value of silence is also embraced by many Aboriginal cultures. Kanu (2007) conducted a study over a school year to examine how the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into instructional methods would affect the academic achievement of Aboriginal students in high school. The study utilized a comparative case-study between two Grade 9 social studies classrooms – one which was enriched with Aboriginal content and perspectives and one that was not. In the enriched classroom, instructional methods such as sharing stories and talking circles were implemented. Overall, the result was that the Aboriginal students in the enriched class demonstrated better understanding of the course content, higher level thinking, and improved self-confidence (Kanu, 2007). According to Mark Forsythe, the First Nations Education Co-ordinator of the Good Spirit School Division, in many First Nations cultures, “when a storyteller speaks, the silence between the words is as important to the story as the words themselves” (personal correspondence, June, 2014). The reason is that silence is a sign of respect in First Nations culture and the storyteller utilizes it to show respect for the story and what it represents (Forsythe, personal correspondence, June, 2014). Many First Nations students

have been taught this method of speaking as well and then they come to school and are “bombarded with classmates who speak all the time and teachers who ask them to speak all the time, and they are totally lost and confused” (Forsythe, 2014, personal correspondence, June, 2014).

What Kanu’s (2007) research showed is that when the teacher made more of an effort to respect other ways of speaking and communicating (such as valuing silence) the students demonstrated a better overall understanding of the course content and higher level thinking and were more accountable for their own learning.

***Student accountability.***

In order for students to engage in a dialogic classroom, they not only need the discussion skills outlined above, but also they need to be accountable to their learning community (Cazden, 2001). This idea is one of three themes that emerged from Evans’s (2002) study of Grade 5 students and their experiences in literature groups. Evans conducted the study in a school located in a predominantly working class neighbourhood and described the range of reading abilities as typical. Over the course of an entire school year Evans observed students during peer-led literature groups and then led the students through reflective debriefing sessions with the purpose of learning about students’ perceptions of their experiences.

One of the major themes that emerged from the data analysis was that the students had a clear notion of the conditions that were conducive to effective discussions (Evans, 2002). The conditions that the students identified were “the need to read the book, write in their literature journal, and participate or have something to say in discussion” (Evans, 2002, p. 54). Basically, the students identified and articulated what most teachers would

agree is the first step to being an active participant in a discussion: being prepared. The students noted that when everyone was prepared it made it easier for everyone to participate, but when even one member had not read the book it made it harder for anyone to participate. The focus of the discussion time then became an explanation of what had happened in the section of the book that the student had not read.

Dialogic classrooms share the common characteristics of questioning, exploratory talk and interthinking, co-construction of knowledge, uptake, valuing silence and student accountability. In order for a dialogic environment to exist, it is important that all participants in the classroom understand and develop/adopt these skills so they can fully and successfully participate in interactions. If a student or a group of students is struggling with one or more of these skills, the teacher can utilize mini-lessons to help support those students' learning.

### **Teaching in a dialogic classroom.**

To teach from a dialogic stance, teachers may need to first examine their current teaching practices. While many teachers may think they are encouraging open-discussions, in their study Applebee, Langer, Nystrand and Gamoran (2003) found that this open-discussion occurred, on average, 1.7 minutes per 60 minute class. The research by Applebee et.al. (2003) involved 19 schools, 10 high school and nine middle schools, in five different states and involved a total of 1,111 students in 64 classes. Data, which were gathered by five researchers, included the observation of a writing task given during a class early in the school year and follow-up assessments, as well as a student questionnaire, in the spring. The research team observed four classes, two in the fall and two in the spring, in each of the participating classrooms. During the observations,

researchers used the CLASS computer program (Nystrand, 1999) to record class activities as well as to create audio recordings. The researchers then used principal components analyses with Varimax rotations to analyze the data. The analysis of the data revealed that, on average, students engaged in open-discussion for less than two minutes in a 60 minute class. According to Applebee et.al., while this amount of time may seem low, 30 seconds of engagement in open-discussion is actually a considerable amount of time during the ordinary pace of classroom discourse (p. 707). These findings still mean, however, that in an average classroom, students are engaging in open-discussion, or dialogic learning, for only three or four 30-second clips of time. To truly engage students in dialogic learning, these 30-second exchanges need to be expanded and included throughout the majority of the 60 minute class. In order to increase the number of opportunities students have to engage in open or dialogic discussions, teachers need to adopt a dialogic teaching stance.

To teach from a dialogic stance teachers need to not only examine their current practices and develop the skills outlined in the previous section, but they also need to be able to implement these skills with flexibility and in a way that is responsive to students' needs (Boyd, 2012). Boyd examined one teacher's responsive teaching methods and the impact these methods had on students' success in her classroom. She taught an English language learner (ELL) classroom with 6 Grade 4 and 5 students in the southeastern United States. The students received 40 minutes of ELL pull-out time daily in this classroom which the researcher observed for six weeks. The data were collected through observations, audio and video recordings, and debriefing sessions with the classroom teacher after the lessons.

Boyd (2012) found that the teacher's success was due to the fact that she was constantly adapting her lessons based on cues from the students. This willingness to adapt came from her definition of success in the classroom which was that "sometimes successful is just that they are...able to share and generate ideas" (Boyd, 2012, p. 34). The teacher did not base her definition of success on getting through the lesson or completing a planned activity. Her teaching was flexible so that she could respond to what her students were telling her and adapt to their needs accordingly.

A study by Groenke (2010), on the other hand, showed that teacher flexibility is not the norm. This case study focused on eight pre-service English teachers who participated in an online discussion forum (The Web Pen Pals Project) about young adult literature with 24 middle school students. The pre-service teachers (PSTs) logged on six times over the course of a 15 week semester and participated in real time with three middle school students each. Since only three pre-service teachers (PSTs) participated in all six forums, they were the only ones included in the data analysis. The data collected included transcripts of the one-hour sessions, the PSTs written reflection logs and transcripts of the one-hour interviews conducted with the PSTs after the online chats were complete. The data were then analyzed with a cross-case analysis comparing the sessions of the three PSTs as individual cases. By analyzing the cases in this manner, the researcher was able to identify issues each PST had as well as look for common themes through all the cases (Creswell, 2013).

While the hope was that using a format that was specifically structured to promote dialogic discussion would encourage the PSTs to engage in the conversations from this standpoint, the findings revealed that overwhelmingly, the PSTs did the majority of the

speaking in the forums, directed the majority of the questioning and that the majority of the responses were either teacher-student or student-teacher. In contrast to the teacher in Boyd's (2012) study who allowed the conversations in her classroom to be driven by the students, the PSTs in Groenke's (2010) study showed a need to be in control of the questioning at almost all times. The few instances that arose where students generated the questions were generally seen as 'off topic' by the PSTs and they quickly re-directed the conversation back 'on topic' by posing a question of their own. This need to be in control could be due to many of these PST's own experience with IRF/IRE questioning models as students that taught them that teachers should always be in control of the discussion and questioning.

The possible reasoning behind the majority of teachers' need to control the conversation was the focus of Fisher's (2010) study. The participants were from one cohort of 75 teacher trainees. They were asked to complete a Literacy Biography at the beginning of the term in which they were asked to write reflective pieces and respond to interviews in which they discussed their own memories of reading, writing, speaking and listening in elementary school.

The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data included a lack of recall of any aspects of talk; the teacher's management or domination of discussion; positive and negative experiences of talk; opportunities for collaborative learning and debate; questioning as the remit of the teacher; predominance of teacher input followed by individual or silent work; and the relationship between talk and behaviour management (Fisher, 2012). Overwhelmingly, the PSTs in this study demonstrated that, through their own elementary school experiences, they perceived talk in the classroom as negative.

Many of these themes were also evident in the actions of the PSTs from Groenke's (2010) study – questioning is the job of the teacher, using questions for behaviour management (or to get students 'back on task'), and predominance of teacher talk. It is not surprising, then that many teachers may not be comfortable moving toward a dialogic teaching stance that requires them to give up the role of all-knowing expert and adopt a stance of flexibility and responsiveness to student needs (Aukerman, 2007; Boyd, 2012). If the teacher is willing to teach with flexibility and in a way that is responsive to students' needs, it will enable the students to create knowledge and understanding for themselves (Aukerman, 2007).

### **Learning in a dialogic classroom.**

Aukerman (2007) conducted a case study to examine student practices in a dialogic classroom. The participants in this study were seven Grade 5 students in a summer school program in the western United States. The discussion group was led by Max, a veteran teacher of 23 years. In their twice-weekly, hour-long discussion sessions, the students read and discussed a piece of short fiction. The researcher observed these discussions by watching videotape of the sessions. Some viewings were done independently by the researcher and some were done with Max while the researcher took notes on Max's comments and interpretations about what he was seeing. The researcher then reviewed transcripts of the sessions and calculated participation based on turns of talk and number of lines spoken.

It is important to note that one of the key factors that contributed to these students' success, as introduced in the last section, was Max's refusal to fulfill the role of "all-knowing teacher" (Aukerman, 2007, p. 67). The reactions this shift caused in the

students' behaviour was one of the key focuses of this study. By Grade 5, and possibly even earlier, students interact with each other with the understanding that the teacher has the right answer. Students were willing to discuss with one another but were constantly looking to Max for validation that they were 'right'. When Max refused to fill this role initially it was unsettling for the students, but once they accepted Max's new role, they were able to create meaning and understanding amongst themselves by piecing together the knowledge each student brought to the discussion. It did not take long for the students to step into the space left when there was no teacher guiding them to the 'right' answer.

A study by Buty and Mortimer (2008) also looked at how students' roles changed in response to the changing role of the teacher in a dialogic classroom. While this case study focused on four classes of Grade 11 physics, the implications can be applied to students at middle years as well. Along with observing and taking notes in the classroom, the researchers also analyzed the transcripts from the four classes. The teacher modelled multiple ways of knowing instead of simply the 'right' way of knowing. The findings of this study support those of Aukerman's (2007) because when the teacher stepped out of the 'all-knowing' role students filled the space but because they had observed their teaching demonstrating multiple ways of knowing, the students then took up this concept of multiple perspectives in their own work (Buty & Mortimer, 2008).

Pytash (2013) further examined student roles by attempting to remove herself (as course instructor) from the student discussions entirely. This case study involved 22 undergraduate, pre-service teachers (PSTs) at a Midwestern university in the United

States. The PSTs read two young adult novels and participated in online literature circle discussions. While the online discussions were intended to be peer-led, the researcher did intervene on some discussion topics. The data collected included the online literature circle discussions and focus group interviews that took place after the discussions were completed. The data were analyzed using constant comparative method to find emerging themes.

The findings of this study showed that when left almost to their own devices, these PSTs were able to conduct meaningful, thought-provoking, and knowledge-building dialogic discussions (Pytash, 2013). While these PST's were able to successfully participate in these dialogic discussions, participation in dialogic classrooms demands "sophisticated discussion skills, higher-level thinking, and a good grasp of content knowledge- a combination that many college students would find challenging. Yet with the right [circumstances] even middle level students are capable of this level of academic discourse" (Chiaravalloti, 2002, p.20). Much of the research on students' roles in dialogic classrooms shows the same result- that when the teacher steps back and gives up control of the conversation and the 'right' answer, students will step into the space and fill it with their own knowledge and understandings. While students have the ability to step in and begin sharing their knowledge and understandings, in order to truly participate in a dialogic discussion and reach deeper understanding, they need to be explicitly taught how to engage in this type of conversation.

### **Teaching discussion skills.**

The purposeful use of talk in the classroom is currently being recognized as the most important educational tool available to help students develop understanding and

encourage students to co-create knowledge (Mercer & Hodgkin, 2008). However, a focused effort from teachers is necessary to explicitly teach students how to actively engage with each other's ideas in order for students to be able to co-construct knowledge (Gillies, Nichols, Burgh & Haynes, 2012; Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif & Sams, 2004; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003).

A study conducted by Mercer et al. (2004) examined the effect of explicitly teaching students these skills. This research was conducted in primary schools in southeast England and focused on the implementation of an experimental teaching program for 9-10 year olds. The teaching program was designed by the researchers and was based on their previous findings that "language skills associated with improved reasoning can be effectively taught and learned" (Mercer et al., 2004, p. 362). The researchers hypothesized that explicit teaching of ways to use talk effectively would raise children's achievement. The program consisted of 12 lesson plans implemented by the classroom teacher. The effects of the program were studied through observation and formal assessment of 109 children in the experimental classes and compared to similar observations of 121 children in control classes. The findings showed that when students were explicitly taught to talk and reason effectively with one another they showed deeper thinking and more complex reasoning skills than students who had not been explicitly taught these skills.

A study conducted by Gillies et al. (2012) had similar results. Gillies et al. (2012) conducted a qualitative study involving 352 Grade 6 students and 18 Grade 6 teachers from 18 different classrooms in Brisbane, Australia. The researchers collected audio and video data from two Science units. One of the 6-10 week units was taught in the first

term and upon the unit's completion, teachers were given instruction on how to teach their students dialogic and inquiry skills. The second 6-10 week unit was taught during the second term, after the teachers had a chance to teach the skills, and the audio and video data from the two units were compared to determine if the students were affected by the teachers' interventions. The researchers found that by explicitly teaching students to use specific, meta-cognitive strategies the students showed enhanced reasoning, problem-solving, and knowledge co-creation abilities (Gillies et al., 2012). Research has also shown that when students can think deeper and reason more complexly with the subject matter they are studying, they are more engaged in the learning process (Gillies et al., 2012; Mercer et al., 2004; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003).

### **Fostering Engagement with Historical Texts**

The research in this chapter has outlined the common characteristics of dialogic classrooms as well as how teachers can adopt a dialogic teaching stance. Findings from the research in both of those areas show how the creation of a dialogic classroom can foster deeper engagement and deeper thinking in general. The following section addresses specifically how all of these elements can help contemporary students engage with historical texts.

Traditional classroom settings often use the IRE/IRF questioning model, which was outlined previously in this chapter. This questioning model is problematic in that it does not require any deep thinking or understanding which was shown in Hall's (2007) study. A student can perform well in these situations without having any deep insight or understanding of the novel. In a dialogic classroom however, the questions begin as

more multifaceted and students build on each other's ideas to create a complex solution to the problem proposed (Chiaravalloti, 2010; Reznitskaya, 2012; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Soter, Wilkinson, Murphy, Rudge, Reninger & Edwards, 2009). Chiaravalloti (2010) offers examples of how students build on each other's ideas by including excerpts of student discussions from her sixth-grade English class. The students featured in the article showed they could "reason with language" (Mercer, 1995 as cited in Chiaravalloti, 2010, p. 19) in their dialogic classroom and that doing so enabled them to reach a deeper level of thinking that would not occur for most students in a traditional teacher-led discussion.

Soter et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of nine small-group discussion approaches with the intent of answering the question, "which discourse features can serve as indicators of high-level learning and comprehension of the text?"(p. 380). The study revealed that the central characteristic of dialogic classrooms, questioning, is one of these features. The researchers based their examination of questioning on Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, and Prendergast's (1997) description of questioning which is that "productive classroom discourse exhibits a high degree of reciprocity in interaction and is marked by open-ended questions that create contexts for students to generate extended responses which, in turn, reflect reasoning processes that are typically regarded as indicative of high-level thinking" (cited in Soter et al., 2009, p. 380). The meta-analysis examined several different methods of questioning but the results revealed that in the authentic dialogic situations, all questioning showed high frequency of high-level thinking (Soter et al., 2009).

If the characteristics of a dialogic classroom can help students develop deeper understanding and higher-level thinking when engaging with texts (Chiaravalloti, 2010; Reznitskaya, 2012; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Soter et al., 2009), the next step is to help students apply those skills to historical texts to achieve the same levels of understanding and thinking. Many teachers know that choosing to read historical texts in their classrooms is “a vehicle for engaging students in a rich variety of language arts experiences [such as] discussing history and humanity, improving reading skills [and] practicing critical thinking” (Grierson, Thursby, Dean & Crowe, 2007, p. 80). The problem, however, is that most middle years students are sceptical that they have anything in common with the characters in historical fiction and this scepticism brings an extra level of hesitancy to engage with the texts (Hsieh, 2012).

Rosenblatt (1994a) reminds teachers and students that to make meaning with any text “we peel off layer after layer of concerns brought to bear – social, biographical, historical, linguistic, textual – and at the center we find the inescapable transactional events between readers and texts” (p. 175). When compared to contemporary novels, historical texts offer more layers that need to be peeled back. Hsieh (2012) stated that she has taught *The Dairy of Anne Frank* (Goodrich & Hackett, 1995) in her Grade 8 classroom for 10 years and every year the students’ initially convey that they have nothing in common with Anne, other than their age. But, once students engage in a variety of activities in their dialogic classroom, they start to understand that they share a lot more with Anne Frank than age. Students realize that they also share an “understanding of the importance of family; having secrets one must hide; being in an environment where you can feel trapped; and how sometimes hope is the only thing a

person can count on to survive” (Hsieh, 2012, p. 48). Along with Anne Frank, the characters in *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys (2012), *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyn (2008), *The Boy Who Dared* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (2008), and *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli (2003) all enable students to recognize these common values, understandings, and experiences. Ways to approach these historical texts from a dialogic stance are examined in Chapter 3. Studying historical texts from a dialogic stance can allow students to examine the ways these characters dealt with difficult situations and can result in indignation, insight and an understanding of why it is important to connect characters’ experiences with their own identities, regardless of the time period in which the characters are portrayed (Hsieh, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

The responsibility for the success or failure of a dialogic classroom falls mostly to the teacher – at least at first. It is absolutely necessary that the teacher is able to remove herself from the position of ‘all-knowing expert’ or the students will never have a space to step into to create their own learning. If students believe that there is a right answer to be achieved the risks they are willing to take will be limited because there is still a great possibility that they are wrong. Having said that, it is by no means an easy task for a teacher to step out of the all-knowing role. Based on her own experience as a student, a teacher may have preconceived biases about the place of talk in the classroom and more often than not, especially if it is based on experiences from 20 years ago or more, it is going to be a negative perception of talk in the classroom. If, however, teachers can be in situations where they are authentically engaged in a dialogic discussion for their own learning, there is a better chance they will be able to overcome those past biases.

Overcoming these biases is not only necessary to developing an authentic dialogic classroom, but also to ensure student success in general.

The review of the research examined in this chapter outlined the characteristics of dialogic classrooms, discussed how teachers needs to adapt in order to create a dialogic classroom, and communicated the possible influences of this adaptation on student learning. Emerging evidence from research indicates that dialogic classrooms have the potential to “help students develop higher order thinking skills and deeper understanding of subject-matter knowledge” (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013, p. 114).

If teachers believe that creating a dialogic classroom is beneficial to all students’ success and understand how this creation can help students to reach deeper levels of engagement and higher level thinking skills with historical texts, the only question left should be ‘so how do I do that in my classroom?’. I respond to this question in Chapter 3 by offering practical suggestions that teachers can implement to create a dialogic classroom and by presenting a unit plan that incorporates dialogic teaching and learning.

## Chapter 3

### *Perspectives* UNIT

#### **A Message to Teachers**

“One of the most significant and persistent barriers to students’ achievement resides in the collective mind-set of the very students we teach” (Zmuda, 2008, p.38). By the middle years’ level, you may have noticed that many students have learned the game of school and have figured out how to get through classes without ever really engaging in what they are doing (Chiaravolloti, 2010; Hall, 2007; Zmuda, 2008). Students complete the assigned questions, check the correct box, or give the answer without achieving any deeper understanding of the subject matter with which they are meant to be engaging with (Hall, 2007; Zmuda, 2008). At my school, teachers – especially English Language Arts teachers - are constantly lamenting this situation. We want to push our students away from the quest to get the right answer (usually as quickly as possible) and get them to develop their ability to reason. The creation of a dialogic classroom is fundamental to achieving this change by removing the option of telling the teacher what “she wants to hear” because what she wants to hear is creative, independent ideas that are a result of each student’s experiences and knowledge.

If dialogic classrooms are so desirable, and have long been proposed by teachers and researchers as a structure to engage students more deeply, why are they not common practice? When many teachers in middle and high school classrooms in the United States are spending only 1.7 minutes per 60-minute class on dialogic discussions (Applebee et.al., 2003), clearly there is a disconnect between the recommendation of dialogic

teaching and the reality of its implementation in classrooms. Based on my reading of the literature, I have found this situation exists for two reasons.

The first reason is that many teachers, myself included, think they are utilizing effective discussions in their classrooms when what they are really doing is engaging in question-answer discussion which is basically just a modified form of IRE/IRF (Reznitskaya, 2012). I thought I was facilitating great classroom discussions until I read deeper into the research on dialogic teaching and learning. For other teachers who are interested in developing a more dialogic classroom, I recommend reading Reznitskaya's (2012) article "Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Language Use During Literature Discussions". While the article provides a great overview of what dialogic teaching is, more importantly Reznitskaya includes a rubric teachers can use to evaluate their own communication in the classroom. To truly move into dialogic teaching, we must be willing to evaluate our own practices and acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses in the forms of communication we are currently using in our classrooms.

Another of our teaching practices we must be willing to evaluate is the type of questions we are asking, not just the way we are asking them. Barrett (1976) and Raphael (1982) both proposed categorizing questions based on the level of thinking that the student is required to do to answer the question. While a more thorough explanation of these theories can be found in Chapter 2, they are both introduced in the *Perspectives* unit in lesson 2, and then incorporated throughout the unit, with the use of Raphael's (1982) terms thin questions and thick questions. Thin questions refer to the type of question in which the student can find the answer directly in the text and what Barrett (1976) refers to as explicit. Answering these types of questions is necessary to ensure

students understand certain basic concepts and plot points about what they are studying, but they do not require any deeper thinking and they do not generate discussion as there is only one possible answer. Thick questions however, require that students develop their own answers in response to the text. These are questions for which there is no explicit answer in the text, but for which students must formulate a response based on evidence in the text, their personal responses to the text, their own experiences, and their discussions with peers; these are the type of questions on which true dialogic discussions are most often based. Both thin and thick questions play a necessary role in a dialogic classroom and students need to be taught the difference between these two types of questions and when to utilize which type of question. There are further suggestions how teachers can explicitly teach students how to identify and generate thin and thick questions in Appendix L.

I argued that in order for dialogic classrooms to exist, the format of questioning must change from teacher-directed to student-centered and the success of this shift is dependent on the teacher stepping out of the all-knowing role, which I believe to be the second reason for this gap between theory and practice. This change can be a very intimidating idea for teachers, who may fear that by stepping away from the front of the class, they will lose control of their class—definitely a valid fear for those who do not understand dialogic teaching. Fortunately, just because dialogic classrooms require the teacher's role to change from being the only one with power, he/she does not need to give up all control and authority in the classroom. Quite the opposite is true: the dialogic classrooms' success depends on the teacher's knowledge, modeling and communication.

In dialogic classrooms teachers “treat students as potential sources of knowledge and opinion” (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, S, & Long, 2003 as cited in Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013, p. 116) but it is also important to clarify that this view of “teacher-student relations does not dismiss the authority of a teacher as a more knowledgeable partner in a discussion” (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013, p. 116). As students become more knowledgeable about the structure of discussions and their role in co-creating knowledge, their view of their teacher changes from keeper of the correct answers to that of a more experienced guide who can help them through this process while still acknowledging that students bring valuable insights to the process (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013).

Teachers in a dialogic classroom also play the incredibly important role of modeling and encouraging metacognition. Just because the teacher has stepped away from giving the correct answer, it does not automatically follow that students will start creating deep, rich responses. The teacher’s role is to enable students to form the conclusions they can through dialogic interactions and then to encourage them to reflect on the process they used to arrive at these conclusions in the effort to get students to reach their own conclusions (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013).

So how do I do that? For teachers who want to read more on practical suggestions for how to implement dialogic teaching practices, I recommend an article by Chiaravalloti (2012). She described how she created a dialogic classroom with her sixth-grade students and included several excerpts of student discussions. Chiaravallotti explains how her use of Talk Tickets scaffolded students understanding of learning through discussion. I have also offered my own interpretation of this strategy in the unit that follows. The remainder of this chapter contains a table showing the Saskatchewan

English Language Arts (ELA) outcomes that this unit meets and a lesson-by-lesson plan for the *Perspectives* unit.

### ***Perspectives* Unit**

The unit described below illustrates how dialogic teaching practices can help contemporary students engage with historical literature. It is a nine-week book club unit for Grade 8 ELA that allows students to delve deeply into the issues in a set of novels through individual contemplation, small group discussions, teacher-involved discussions and whole class interactions all centered around dialogic practices.

### **ELA Outcomes**

*Perspectives* is developed to align with the Saskatchewan Grade 8 English Language Arts Outcomes (2008). This unit incorporates outcomes from all three areas – comprehend and respond (CR), compose and create (CC), and assess and reflect on language abilities (AR). Table 2 outlines the specific outcomes that are met through the teaching of this unit.

Table 2: ELA Outcomes

Outcome Number	Outcome
CR8.1	View, listen to, read, comprehend, and respond to a variety of texts that address identity (e.g., <i>Becoming Myself</i> ), social responsibility (e.g., <i>In Search of Justice</i> ), and efficacy (e.g., <i>Building a Better World</i> ).
CR8.4	View critically and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of visual and multimedia texts including videos, television broadcasts, informational presentations, dramatic presentations, websites, and news programs to locate and interpret key messages and details, to develop conclusions, opinions, and understanding, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the text.
CR8.5	Listen critically to understand, gather information, follow directions, form an opinion, and analyze oral presentations for diverse opinions, presenter's point of view, values, and biases, stereotypes, or prejudices.
CR8.7	Read independently and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of

	information texts including understanding the main ideas and supporting evidence, explaining connections between new ideas and information and previous thoughts, and recognizing any biases or false reasoning.
CC8.6	Use oral language to interact purposefully, confidently, and respectfully in a variety of situations including one-to-one, small group, and large group discussions (expressing feelings and viewpoints and contributing to group harmony).
CC8.7	Use oral language to effectively express information and ideas of complexity in formal and informal situations (e.g., to debate a point, to participate in a meeting, to give a dramatic reading of a poem or play excerpt).
AR8.1	Use information gathered in self-assessment and teacher's assessment to develop and work on goals for improving viewing, listening, reading, representing, speaking, and writing.

(Saskatchewan English Language Arts 8 Curriculum, Guide 2008, pp. 33-48)

Table 3 below provides an outline of the *Perspectives* unit and all of the accompanying documents (e.g., hand-outs, booklets, and schedules) are found in the Appendices. I provide a timeline for the unit and explain each lesson, which is designed for a 60-minute class. The lessons themselves are 45 minutes to allow for 15 minutes of independent reading, shared reading, mini-lessons or other activities that individual teachers may wish to incorporate at the beginning of class. The unit consists of 43 lessons, which leaves two lessons of flex-room for teachers. This unit is designed with the idea that students' previous experiences with discussion in the classroom have been mostly monologic (Boyd & Markarian, 2011) and teacher-directed (IRF/IRE). The first block of lessons is designed to introduce students to the skills necessary to participate in a dialogic classroom, skills they will be expected to utilize throughout the remainder of the unit. The activities of the unit are designed to start in the students' comfort zone by utilizing teacher-generated questions. These questions are designed to be open-ended however, as a way to start moving students out of that comfort zone and towards implementation of the dialogic skills they will be learning. As the unit progresses and

students become more confident with engaging in the dialogic classroom, the activities scaffold them toward more independent, student-generated discussions. All dialogic activities are identified with the notation **DA** in bold font and I have included an explanation at the beginning of the lesson to explain why these activities are dialogic and how they help build a dialogic classroom. The activities marked **DA** at the beginning of the unit are still mostly teacher-led as they are the activities to teach the students the fundamental skills they need to participate in dialogic learning. As stated previously, as the students' confidence in their use of dialogic skills progresses, the activities encourage them to engage more authentically in dialogic learning by removing the teacher influence. These activities are labelled with a **DA+** notation.

Table 3: Unit Outline

Lesson #	Lesson Plan
1	<p>(adapted from Chiaravalloti, 2010)</p> <p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will need to be in groups of five</li> <li>• Each group will need an envelope of 'talk tickets' (colored index cards) that has five different coloured cards and approximately 30 cards of each colour</li> <li>• Students will need scissors</li> </ul> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>The activities in this lesson are to introduce students to the general idea of dialogic discussion. Students are encouraged to participate in several student-student discussions, instead of teacher-student-teacher discussions. This lesson also introduces students to metalanguage (The New London Group, 1996). Metalanguage, the practice of talking about talking, is introduced to students by asking them to think about and discuss the way that people participate in discussions. Students are then introduced to the most basic characteristic of dialogic discussion, balance.</b></p> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a whole class brainstorm on topics to discuss (depending on</li> </ul>

	<p>the time of year when this unit is taught it could be ideas from a previous unit, activities over summer holidays or just topics in general that interest middle years students)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once a good number of topics are on the board, have students choose a topic they could have a conversation about (five students per topic)</li> <li>• Arrange students into groups and give each group an envelope of talk tickets. Have each student choose a colour and then collect all of their talk tickets from the pile</li> <li>• Inform students that they will have five minutes to discuss their topic and each time they talk they are to place one of their talk tickets into a pile in the middle</li> <li>• When the five minutes are up, call attention back to the whole class and ask students what they notice about the pile of talk tickets. Most likely that some people talked a lot and others very little</li> <li>• Ask students if they think this characteristic reflects a ‘good’ discussion</li> <li>• Engage students in a discussion on the characteristics of good discussion – what does it look like in a classroom? What does it look like at home? With your friends? With your grandparents? What are the differences between conversations you enjoy and ones you don’t?</li> <li>• Compile a list of suggestions on the board</li> <li>• Explain (if it wasn’t suggested) that one of the characteristics of good discussion is that we take turns speaking – no one person dominates the conversation and that includes the teacher.</li> <li>• Have students focus back on their small discussion groups and try again, this time being aware of how often each group member is contributing and trying to balance it. Give students five minutes to practice</li> <li>• When the five minutes are up, again bring student attention back to the whole class and ask for student input on how the discussions went this time. There will be some success and some failure – some groups may have had more balanced conversations while others may have sat in silence for most of the time</li> <li>• Brainstorm ways that the silence can be avoided without one person dominating the discussion</li> <li>• As a class, select the method/s that would work the best (e.g., asking someone a direct question) and develop a prompt for this method</li> <li>• Have each student take five of his/her talking tickets and cut them into triangles then write the prompt on it. Explain to students when these cards are used in the future, the blank cards are for anytime they contribute to the discussion, and the triangle cards are for every time they invite someone else to share or join the discussion</li> <li>• Explain to students that the unit is going to focus on learning how to participate in <b>dialogic learning</b> and that the next few classes will</li> </ul>
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	<p>explore the basic skills necessary for that to happen – the first of which is equal participation from group members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a place in the classroom where the skills and the prompts for each skill can be posted as a reference for students to refer back to throughout the unit</li> </ul>
2	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a collection of about 10 questions, some thick some thin, to distribute to students. They will be working in pairs so you will need one set of questions for every two students</li> <li>• Refer to Chapter 2 of this document for explanations of different levels of questioning</li> <li>• A copy of <i>One More Border: the True Story of One Family's Escape from War-Torn Europe</i> by William Kaplan (1998)</li> <li>• Students will need to be organized into small groups for the activity following the story so you may wish to organize these ahead of time</li> <li>• The talk ticket envelopes</li> </ul> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>The activities in this lesson give students an opportunity to practice the characteristic of dialogic discussion learned in the previous lesson (balance) and introduce them to the second characteristic, questioning. Students are encouraged to share their input and opinions, but are introduced to the idea that these must be based on specific criteria and be backed-up with evidence, a key characteristic of transactional learning (Rosenblatt, 1994b).</b></p> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a brief explanation of questioning involving the following points based on Raphael's (1982) QAR strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good readers ask both thick and thin questions as they read</li> <li>▪ The answers to thin questions are 'right there' – students can point to the line in the text where the answer can be read and copied from</li> <li>▪ Thin questions – when? Where? Who? How many?</li> <li>▪ To answer thick questions students need to think and search – students need to generate the answer <i>based on</i> information in the text</li> <li>▪ Thick questions – why do you think...? What if...? How would you feel if...? What might...?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hand-out the sample questions and ask students to go through them with their partner and label each one as 'thick' or 'thin'</li> <li>• Bring the whole class back together and go through the questions, asking students to share how they labeled each question and their</li> </ul>

	<p>reasons for doing so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For each question, ask students if anyone disagrees with the label the student suggested. Discuss the different opinions and reason and come to a conclusion for the label of each</li> <li>• Tell students that you are going to read them the book <i>One More Border: the True Story of One Family's Escape from War-Torn Europe</i> and that while they listen they need to come up with one thin question and one thick question about the story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students need to see the visuals while you are reading so, if possible, display the book under a document camera</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When the story is finished, give students a chance to share the questions they generated with the class</li> <li>• Organize students into small groups (four or five students) and remind them of the characteristic of dialogic discussion they learned yesterday (equal participation)</li> <li>• Explain to students that they will now have a chance to practice this skill with the questions they generated listening to the story. They must address all 8/10 questions that the group members created and they should use the talk tickets the same way they did yesterday</li> <li>• When students have addressed all their groups' questions, bring attention back to the whole class and ask which were easier to discuss the thin questions or the thick questions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students responses will vary, but the general idea will be that the thick questions were easier to discuss because you can not really discuss thin questions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Inform students that this concept is the second characteristic of dialogic discussion – asking thick questions and add this feature to the list in the room along with the question prompts for thick questions</li> <li>• Have each student cut four of his/her talk tickets into squares and add one of the thick question prompts to each ticket</li> </ul>
3	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along with the original rectangular talk tickets, and the triangle talk tickets, make several of the original talk tickets into circles with the uptake prompts (listed below) in each colour. The talking tickets envelopes should now have (in each colour) blank tickets, triangle tickets and circular tickets</li> <li>• Students will need questions to respond to so they can practice utilizing uptake. Generate a list of general topic questions that students could discuss for each group (e.g., the school year should run all year, the school day should be extended, all students should have to wear a uniform, and so on)</li> <li>• In small groups students practice uptake skills –consider organizing these groups ahead of time</li> <li>• Refer to Chapter 2 of this document for a description and explanation</li> </ul>

	<p>of uptake</p> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>This lesson allows students to practice the dialogic skills they learned in the previous lessons and introduces them to another key characteristic of dialogic discussion, uptake. Students are introduced to uptake through an explanation of the concept and through teacher modelling. Students will then practice all the dialogic skills they have learned by utilizing talk tickets.</b></p> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a brief explanation on uptake that includes the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The key difference between ‘talking’ and ‘discussing’ is <b>uptake</b></li> <li>▪ Uptake is when you respond to what was said before you prior to sharing your own idea</li> <li>▪ Uptake can be – rephrasing what was said, asking a <i>thick</i> question about what was said, responding to what was said</li> <li>▪ Uptake= “What you’re saying is...”, “I agree with that because...”, “I disagree with that because...”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pose one of the general questions you prepared prior to the lesson to the class, select one student to respond and then model uptake by utilizing one of the uptake prompts</li> <li>• Select a small group of students to then model the skill. Pose the same question to the group and allow them to answer and practice utilizing the uptake prompts (reminding and correcting as needed)</li> <li>• Organize students into small groups and distribute the talk tickets envelopes</li> <li>• Once students have sorted their talk tickets by colour, explain that the new tickets are for students to put in the middle each time they demonstrate uptake</li> <li>• Give each group a question and allow them time to practice the two discussion skills they have learned so far while you circulate the room observing and offering feedback</li> <li>• At the end of the lesson, add Uptake and the prompts to the list of characteristics in the classroom</li> </ul>
*	<p>For the remainder of the lessons in this unit, students are asked to participate in different types of discussions. For the first while, students will need to continue to use the talking tickets. As they become more comfortable with dialogic learning, they can move away from the tickets into more unstructured discussion. Each teacher will decide when his/her students are ready to move away from using the talking tickets based on ongoing observation.</p>
4	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to class, create the following chart in your classroom. This chart will stay up for the entire unit, so put it somewhere that is easily</li> </ul>

visible for students, but that will not be in the way

### Perspectives

Thoughts to Consider | Outcomes | Big Questions  
(Big Ideas)

#### DA:

**Students will again have a chance to practice their dialogic discussion skills by using the talk tickets in this lesson. Students will also be engaged in metalanguage through the introduction and discussion of the term ‘dialogic’. This lesson also encourages students to start discussing the Big Ideas in this unit, as opposed to general topics they were using previously. As well, each student will begin developing his/her own questions that will direct his/her learning.**

#### Introduction:

- Explain the following ideas to students:
  - We are starting a new unit called *Perspectives* and today we are going to start looking at some of the ideas that we will encounter in this unit
  - One of the key skills we are focussing on in this unit is dialogic learning (which the teacher has been using in previous discussions)
  - Explain/discuss what the term dialogic means – incorporating ideas from the previous conversation on good discussion skills - and add it to the chart

#### Lesson

- Distribute copies of the Anticipation Guide to each student (Appendix A)
- As a class, read aloud each statement on the guide, then allow students a moment to mark ‘A’ if they agree or ‘D’ if they disagree
- Once all statements are addressed, write the four focus ideas (Big Ideas) on the chart. These can be found on the first page of the novel booklets
- Survey the class and beside each statement mark how many students agreed and how many students disagreed
- Organize students into groups based on their responses. Each group will be given one of the four Big Ideas to discuss and the group members will be students who both agreed and disagreed with the statement
- Hand out the talking tickets and allow students time to practice the new dialogic skills they have been learning with the Big Ideas
- Once students have had enough time to discuss, encourage them to move onto the follow-up question and make predictions on the

	<p>content of the unit as a group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussion of what students come up with, guide them towards the idea that, in general, this unit will deal with WWII – Nazism, Germany, the Holocaust.</li> <li>• With these ideas in mind, have students complete one of the two pre-unit brainstorms (p. 2 of Anticipation Guide in Appendix A) about WWII.</li> <li>• As students are completing their chosen brainstorm, circulate and help students use that information to form three questions they would like to learn the answers to. Remind students to develop thick questions</li> <li>• When all students have their questions created, invite students to share the questions they have generated</li> </ul> <p>Extra:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since students will be completing these steps at different times, encourage those students who finish early to discuss their questions with another classmate</li> </ul>
5	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freewrite: My favourite research project...</li> </ul> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>While a major component of a dialogic classroom is discussion, that does not mean every lesson and activity needs to have the students engaged in discussions. To teach from a dialogic stance also requires that teachers encourage students to develop their own questions, take ownership of their own learning and to express their voices in the classroom. The research project in the next four lessons reflects these ideas.</b></p> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students take out the Anticipation Guide sheets they completed last class</li> <li>• Distribute the WWII research Project sheets (Appendix B)</li> <li>• Now that students understand what they are being asked to complete, as a class come up with the ‘next steps’ that will lead to the project’s completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research</li> <li>2. Organize information</li> <li>3. Choose presentation layout</li> <li>4. Create your project</li> <li>5. Present your project</li> </ol> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Remind students of some of the ideas discussed last class, direct them back to the Big Ideas on the board, and have them re-read the three questions they each came up with</li> <li>• Use the remaining time to brainstorm sources students can access for their research</li> </ul>

6-8	<p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will have this time for the next three classes to complete their research</li> <li>• While there is only three classes set aside for in-school research, the presentation of the projects is not scheduled for another week so that students will have time outside of class to continue working on their research projects</li> <li>• While students are working, pull small groups of students to preview the novels for the book clubs</li> <li>• Give students one copy of each novel, remind them (if necessary) how to preview a novel</li> <li>• Once they have previewed each one, have them write down their top three choices of which they would like to read for this unit</li> </ul>
9	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the lesson, organize students into groups of four and create a simple puzzle for each group (no more than 10 pieces)</li> <li>• One version of the puzzle will just be a blank sheet of white paper</li> <li>• The second version of the puzzle will have a picture on it</li> <li>• Make sure that both versions of the puzzle have the same pieces</li> <li>• A copy of one of the pictures from <i>Zoom</i> by Istvan Banyai (1995). Each student will need a different picture (some doubles may be necessary depending on number of students, that is fine)</li> </ul> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>This lesson asks students to think about the Big Picture. The activities require each student to complete a task independently and then share that task with classmates to, literally, complete the big picture. This task is to encourage students to understand that, in a dialogic classroom, everyone must bring something to the discussion, and that what everyone brings to the discussion is valid and necessary.</b></p> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize students into small groups</li> <li>• Give each group the blank puzzle and see how long it takes to complete</li> <li>• Give each group the puzzle with the picture and see how long it takes to complete</li> <li>• Debrief: it is easier to complete the puzzle when you have all the information – the ‘Big Picture’</li> </ul> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand out pictures to students</li> <li>• Explain to students that each picture is just a small part of a larger picture that is zoomed in</li> <li>• Allow students a few minutes to try and draw what they think that</li> </ul>

	<p>larger picture might be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once students have had a chance to think about how their picture fits into the whole, ask students to arrange the pictures they were given in sequence. Encourage them to move around the room, work as team, and discuss with one another</li> <li>• When they think they have the progression correct, tape the pictures to the wall in order. Allow a few more minutes for corrections</li> <li>• Once the pictures are in the correct order. Have students walk the length of the pictures, from beginning to end – first walking in one direction, then the other.</li> <li>• Ask students to tape the picture they drew beneath the picture that comes after theirs (when moving forward through the images)</li> <li>• In their original puzzle groups, ask students to discuss why the pictures they drew (likely) did not match the ones from the book. Let students know you are going to be asking them to share these ideas next class, so they may want to write them down</li> <li>• If possible, leave the pictures up on the wall for next class</li> </ul>
10	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students get up and walk along the length of the <i>Zoom</i> pictures again</li> <li>• Ask students to share what some of the ideas where from their small group discussions last class.</li> </ul> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer students back to the <i>Perspectives</i> chart in your room. Review the Big Ideas that you have already added.</li> <li>• Add the Big Questions for the unit (first page of the novel booklets)</li> </ul>
11	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find three generic pictures that can cause different reactions in students (e.g., police officer, school, book, test, hunting, and so on)</li> </ul> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick write: The best movie ever is..... Would a parent agree with this statement? Would a grandparent?</li> </ul> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>This lesson builds on the concepts in lesson 9 – that, in a dialogic classroom every person brings something to the discussion and that all of those contributions are necessary to create the whole picture. The concept is expanded on in this lesson by asking students to think about their worldview or how each person’s unique life influences how he/she views the world.</b></p> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain to students that today they are going to examine how their own experiences and personalities shape the way they see the world</li> <li>• Tell students you are going to show them three pictures. As soon as</li> </ul>

	<p>students see the picture, they should write down their first reactions. Their responses should be honest and do not need to be in sentences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once you have gone through all three pictures, have students go back to their responses and write a brief explanation about why they wrote what they did. For example, what experience did that student have with a police officer that caused them to write ‘brave, heroic, helpful’ or ‘mean, power-trip’.</li> <li>• Have students complete a turn and talk about what they wrote</li> <li>• Bring the class back together and allow students time to share if they wish. Focus the discussion on the past experiences that led to the reactions</li> <li>• Discuss with students how everyone views the world through a different lens. Allow students to discuss what those lens might be – what contributes to a person’s worldview, besides past experiences.</li> </ul>
12	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will need copies of the Same Invention worksheet for each student (Appendix C)</li> <li>• Each student only needs one of the two descriptions on the sheet</li> <li>• Copy all the description ones onto one colour of paper and all the description twos onto another colour of paper</li> </ul> <p><b>DA:</b></p> <p><b>This lesson builds on all the dialogic learning tools students have been utilizing so far. Students are asked to participate in a discussion and, through the ideas generated during that discussion and the use of information given to each student, co-create an answer to the Big Idea they were given.</b></p> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to the Big Ideas on the chart and read aloud ‘There are no bad people, only bad choices’. Pose the question, can a person be both good and bad? Ask students to share their answers and encourage them to back them up with a specific explanation or example</li> </ul> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass out the copies of either description one or description two to each student and ask students to read it to silently</li> <li>• Explain to students that this invention is real, from 1945, and it still exists today.</li> <li>• Have students find a partner with a different coloured piece of paper from their own and, after reading their own description to their partner, discuss whether the invention is ‘good’ or ‘bad’</li> <li>• Bring the class back together and ask students to share what they discussed and decided</li> <li>• Let students know that the invention they are discussing is the atomic</li> </ul>

	<p>bomb. Ask if that information changes whether they think the invention is good or bad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try and lead the students discussion back to the all the ideas presented so far – the Big Picture, WWII, perspectives, worldview</li> </ul>
13	<p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will ‘present’ their research posters</li> <li>• All students will hang their posters around the room</li> <li>• Have half the students stay by their posters to answer questions while the other half walk around asking questions about the posters</li> <li>• After 15 minutes, have the two groups switch roles</li> <li>• When all students have had the opportunity to participate in both roles, have students look back at page 3 of their Anticipation Guides (where they wrote the three questions that directed their research) and write three questions they posed to other students during this activity and the answers they received.</li> <li>• Encourage students to share the new questions and answers they recorded and prompt the student who provided the answer to clarify or elaborate on the answer.</li> <li>• Have students complete the Now I Know section of the Anticipation Guide (p. 3) and remind them to include the information they learned from their classmates as well as the information they learned from their own research.</li> <li>• At the end of the class, collect all posters for assessment</li> </ul>
* <b>DA+</b>	<p>The novel booklets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The novel booklets are designed to continue scaffolding students toward engaging without teacher direction in dialogic learning</li> <li>• They start with teacher - generated questions, both open and closed, for the students to use as foundations for the discussions they are asked to have about each chapter/section of their novel</li> <li>• Approximately half way through the novel, the students take over generating the questions and moderating their own discussions as they become more confident engaging in dialogic learning</li> <li>• A more thorough explanation of this progression can be seen in the written instructions in the novel booklets (Appendix D)</li> </ul>
14	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You need to assign novels to each student</li> <li>• You need a copy of the novel booklet for each student (Appendices E-H)</li> <li>• You need enough copies of the novels for each student</li> <li>• A copy of a calendar for each student that will cover the remainder of this unit</li> </ul>

Introduction:

- Ask students to complete a think-and-toss with the ideas/concepts we have been discussing so far
  - Each student writes one idea on a piece of paper. When teacher says ‘go’, students crumple their papers and toss them around the room. Then students pick up a piece that landed near them and toss again until the teacher calls ‘stop’. When teacher calls ‘stop’ each student finds a piece of paper, uncrumples it, and reads what is on it. The student then adds her own idea and the process is repeated. This process can continue for as many rounds as the teacher thinks is necessary
- When the think-and-toss is finished, create a class brainstorm on the board with all the ideas. Students must share the ideas on the paper they ended up with, not the ideas they generated.

Lesson:

- Inform students which novel they have been assigned, and distribute the corresponding novel study booklet
- The first four sections of the booklet (Appendix D) are the same for all novels, so go through these sections together as a class
- Explain and discuss the Big Questions and add them to the *Perspectives* chart
- Review the Big Ideas
- Explain the Unit tasks and Chapter Questions sections
- For section 3. Book Club, make sure to thoroughly explain the stations
  - The stations are mostly self-explanatory except for “Discussion Days”
  - On these days, students will utilize the dialogic discussion skills they have learned, as well as their talk tickets, to discuss the questions they have been working on in the previous days.
  - As stated previously, at the beginning of the unit, these questions will be teacher generated, but as the unit continues, and students become more confident in their use of dialogic learning skills, students will be engaging in these discussions completely independent of teacher intervention by generating their own questions and bringing them to their book clubs for discussion.
- Give each student a copy of the calendar. Explain that, each group needs to decide which days they want to assign to which station. [depending on your school schedule this may be school days (Day 1, Day 2) or it may be weekdays.]
- The only exception will be the teacher-led days as these must obviously be on a different day for each group. Inform groups that the first item they need to determine is which day they want to do teacher-led and sign up for that day on the board. From there, they can assign their days how they wish.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An explanation of some of the skills and activities that should be covered on the teacher-led days, as well as some sample assessments that can be utilized on these days, can be found in Appendix L</li> <li>▪ If possible, block out one day where there is no teacher-led group. This structure will allow the teacher a day to circulate and check on all groups, as well as assess students as they work</li> <li>▪ Students will likely need more time than is left in this class to complete their schedules. They will have time next class to complete them</li> </ul>
15	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend Independent reading to 20 minutes today</li> <li>• During Independent reading, pull students together in four groups and discuss one outcome for the unit with each group. Talk through the outcome and help them develop an ‘I can’ statement for that outcome. (5 min/group)</li> </ul> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a whole class, have students take out their novel booklets and turn to where the outcomes for this unit are listed</li> <li>• Read through them one at a time and then share each group’s ‘I can’ statement. Encourage suggestions for editing</li> <li>• Once students are content with the ‘I can’ add it to the <i>Perspectives</i> chart under Outcomes</li> <li>• Remind students of what needs to be in their schedules</li> <li>• Also inform students they need to set their own reading pace. They should set their goals by figuring out how to divide their book (pages, sections, chapters, and so on), determining how many reading days they have, and dividing it up by how many chapters/sections they have. Once they have determined their reading goal for each class, add that information to the schedule as well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a sample schedule in Appendix I</li> </ul> </li> <li>• While students are working on their schedules in the novel groups, circulate and discuss the important elements for each novel. This discussion should include anything that is important for students to know that may help them with the novel such as the format, the age of the narrator and so on</li> </ul>
16	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students go back to the original brainstorm they did in the Anticipation Guide</li> <li>• Give them a few minutes to add five new things to the list that they did not know before</li> </ul> <p><b>DA+:</b></p> <p><b>While the lesson outlined below includes specific questions/ideas, by this point in the unit, students will be becoming confident enough within the dialogic classroom to participate in a</b></p>



34	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This lesson is designed to take place around the middle of the book club lessons, but can be inserted anywhere into the unit that makes sense for the class</li> <li>• A copy of <i>Faithful Elephants</i> by Yukio Tsuchiya (1988)</li> <li>• Each student will need a copy of the <i>Faithful Elephants</i> writing sheet (Appendix J)</li> <li>• Most likely, some of the students will have included something on their research posters about the countries involved in WWII – or specifically on Hiroshima/Japan. Bring these posters back out for display</li> </ul> <p><b>DA+:</b></p> <p><b>Moving toward a truly dialogic classroom requires that the teacher choose prompts (in this case a picture book) that challenge the students’ thinking and encourage them to generate questions and ideas without the teacher’s input. This lesson is designed for the teacher to now completely remove him/herself from the role of keeper-of-the-answer and to allow students the space and time to authentically engage in the dialogic classroom.</b></p> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the students whose posters are displayed about Hiroshima, Japan, the atomic bomb</li> <li>• Fill in any details the students may not provide so that all students will have a general understanding about the events</li> </ul> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the book <i>Faithful Elephants</i> by Yukio Tsuchiya. Before reading, tell the students that we will read the book through more than once, but for the first read, they just need to listen to the story</li> <li>• After completing the story, do not say anything. Allow the silence for students to process the emotion. Once they have had time to process the story, and you still have not directed them what to do next with a question or instructions, students may speak up to fill the silence. Embrace their comments, suggestions, questions, but, as much as possible, stay out of the conversation. This process of removing yourself from the conversation will be a good way for you to gauge the development of students’ dialogic skills</li> <li>• Depending on what happens – call the students attention back to the whole class and distribute copies of the Faithful Elephants writing sheet.</li> <li>• Read through the instructions with the class so they are aware of their purpose for listening the second time through</li> <li>• Read the story aloud for a second time</li> <li>• Once the story is finished, allow students the remainder of the class</li> </ul>
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	<p>to work through the think-pair-share on the sheet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students that the composition they create at the end will go in their portfolios</li> </ul>
35	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once students have finished reading their novels and completed all the work in their book clubs, they have two final pieces to complete to demonstrate their understanding of the unit and their ability to engage in dialogic learning</li> </ul> <p><b>DA+:</b></p> <p><b>The discussions students will participate in through this lesson will require students to utilize all the characteristics of dialogic learning they have engaged in this unit. There are no teacher-generated questions and no (or very little) teacher input. Each student will be responsible for bringing his/her unique perspectives to the discussion from studying his/her own novel.</b></p> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students back to the Anticipation Guide</li> <li>• Read through the statements again and have students mark ‘A’ for agree or ‘D’ for disagree in the ‘end of unit’ column</li> <li>• Survey the class and mark how many students agreed and disagreed with each statement. Allow students to engage in a discussion around the change (or lack thereof) in the numbers</li> <li>• Direct students’ attention to the Big Questions and remind them that now they have to create a project that shows their ‘answers’ to these questions</li> <li>• Help students organize themselves into groups so that there is at least one member from each of the original book clubs in each group</li> <li>• Allow the students time to share/discuss their ideas and the evidence from the novel that has helped form that response</li> </ul>
36-39	<p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will have these four classes to work on the final projects they have chosen</li> <li>• The projects, if done well, should take more time than this amount of time, but this work time in class allows for peer and teacher assistance. The remainder of the work can then be done outside of class</li> </ul>
40-43	<p>Set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You should organize students into fishbowl groups by considering student input, your own knowledge of students’ strengths, and the need for a variety of opinions</li> <li>• Prior to this lesson, students should be made aware of their fishbowl groups and reminded of the topics/ideas they should have prepared (his/her own responses, and supporting evidence, to the Big Ideas)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are all things that students should be familiar with from the mini-lessons and the teacher-led days</li> </ul> <p><b>DA+:</b></p> <p><b>This task is one of the final assignments of the unit. In order to be successful, students will need to demonstrate, not only the content knowledge they have gained through this unit, but the dialogic discussion skills as well.</b></p> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be organized into groups of five or six to take part in a fishbowl discussion</li> <li>• Prior to the first discussion, encourage students to discuss the process of participating in a fishbowl discussion, the Big Ideas to be considered and some possibilities of how to address these ideas</li> <li>• The topics are the Big Ideas – but which ones are addressed and how they are addressed will be determined by the students participating in each</li> <li>• Each group will be given 15-20 minutes for their discussion</li> <li>• Observing students will complete assessments for students in the discussion</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students’ understanding of the unit content and ability to engage in dialogic learning will be assessed mostly through outcome-based assessments</li> <li>• The research poster is designed with a more traditional marking system with the idea that it comes at the beginning of the unit and is more in the ‘comfort zone’ of what many students are used to. Depending on the class/school this comfort zone will vary and can easily be adapted</li> <li>• Students understanding of the unit content and their ability to engage in dialogic learning will be assessed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher observation of students in book clubs</li> <li>▪ Novel booklets</li> <li>▪ Portfolio assignments</li> <li>▪ Final project</li> <li>▪ Fishbowl discussions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Suggested Assessment guides can be found in Appendix K</li> </ul>	

## Summary

Findings from research show that by encouraging students to engage in dialogic learning by using exploratory talk (Barnes, 2008) they can reach deeper understanding of those concepts. Utilizing dialogic teaching, as outlined in this and the previous chapter,

can enable teachers to teach their students the skills they need to reach that deeper understanding.

## Chapter 4

### REFLECTIONS

#### What Lead Me to Graduate Studies

Like many fresh-faced high school graduates, at 17 years of age I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up. However, I was sure of one thing - I did not want to be a teacher. My mother was an educator, first as a teacher and later as a superintendent, as were both her parents. As a result, there was a very high level of respect and admiration for the teaching profession in my household and it definitely was not a career one chose because one did not know what else to do with your life.

Something I was sure of is that I loved being a student. I headed to the University of Saskatchewan to study English and thought I would figure the rest out once I was there. I fell in love with university and devoured any English or History class I enrolled in for the next three years. I secretly dreamed I would win the lottery then I could just be a professional student and do nothing but study English literature for the rest of my life! Alas, I did not win the lottery, but something else started happening. I spent a lot of time tutoring, coaching and volunteering with the Boys and Girls Club and I began to look forward to those times as much as I did to my classes. I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with adolescents, helping them learn and grow and I realized there was no better feeling in the world than watching their sense of accomplishment when they achieved something. After careful consideration over the final year of my Arts degree, I accepted that maybe teaching was the profession for me. I was admitted into the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan and have never second-guessed my decision.

While becoming a teacher was the right choice for me, I often find myself questioning what I am asked to do in my classroom, policies or programs I am told to implement, or general best practice ideas with which I am bombarded. It was these questions, along with the fact that part of me still wishes I could be a professional student, that lead me to graduate studies in 2012. The last two years have been an incredible learning experience for me both personally and professionally and as I near the end of this graduate student journey that has often been intense and demanding, I am glad to take a moment and reflect on what I have learned. Personally, I have learned what kind of learner I am, what it is like to be a student, the importance of student engagement, and to question best practices. Professionally, I have learned that learning is transactional, that I need to move away from the all-knowing expert, that I need to reflect on social practices, and that I need to value all student experiences.

**What kind of learner I am.**

Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (1993) is so prevalent in current classroom structures that it is easy to take it for granted. I am told that everything I plan should take students' multiple learning styles into consideration. This consideration was never the case for me as a student, at any level of my education, until I became a graduate student. My public school years generally consisted of pencil and paper assignments and my university classes were almost exclusively lectures. This type of learning was never an obstacle for me as I had no problem learning through these traditional methods, but when I started my graduate classes I realized how much deeper my understanding could be when the class consisted almost entirely of discussions. While the clear expectation was that everyone completed the reading independently prior to class, it was the

discussion of these readings that helped me truly understand the theories, concepts and arguments about which I was reading. Daily, I would discover new ideas, clarify existing thoughts, and reach deeper levels of understanding through these class discussions. It was my reflection upon these experiences that lead me to researching dialogic teaching and learning. I realized that if being able to talk through an idea with my classmates deepened my learning so much, that it could do the same for the middle years students I teach; I just needed to learn how to make that happen. While studying the research that lead to this project, I learned that by using exploratory talk (Barnes, 2008) students can talk through an idea with others and this discourse can lead to the co-creation of knowledge (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013). Implementing these practices in the creation of a dialogic classroom encourages students to create new understandings through discussion (Boyd, 2012; Fisher, 2010; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Smagorinsky, 2013).

### **Being a student again.**

While everything that I do as a teacher is for the good of my students, it is easy to become disconnected from the student experience. Placing myself in the role of student again has reminded me of so many aspects of that experience.

I was reminded that being forced to change could be incredibly difficult. Writing assignments were never particularly difficult for me, so I never really thought about my process of completing them – until my son was born and everything changed. I struggled for months with writing this project and I could not figure out why I was experiencing such difficulty. I had completed the research and I had all my ideas, but I could not get them down on paper in a way that made any sense. It was when I stepped back and reflected on my writing process that I realized the problem. As a writer, I have always

completely immersed myself in the task at hand until I was finished. I take all my research, my laptop, my coffee and snacks, I spread my materials out on the table and I write, for however many solid hours it takes, until the project is done. With a new baby at home that was no longer an option so I was trying to write in hour-long intervals during his naps. While I eventually figured out how to adapt my writing process, making this change was incredibly difficult for me. This realization was a huge learning moment for me as I realized that too often I ask students to adapt their writing styles to the steps that I want them to go through, in the timeline that I decide, without considering the different preferences and styles they may bring to their own processes. While middle years students obviously need some structure and guidance as they are still learning and developing their own writing process, I still feel it is important to honour these differences. As a result, I made sure to incorporate some of this flexibility into the writing requirements in the *Perspectives* unit I designed as part of this project. For example, students are offered options of writing assignments to complete and are allowed the flexibility to create their own timeline in which to complete them. Overall, this realization reinforced for me the importance of learning and embracing new ways of learning, for both students and teachers, such as participating in a dialogic learning environment.

### **The importance of student engagement.**

Numerous studies have shown that students are more likely to be successful if they are engaged in what they are being asked to do (Alexander & Fox, 2008; Fisher & Frey, 2012; Marks, 2000; O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). I felt as though I finally, truly understood what student engagement was when I spent three weeks on campus at the

University of Victoria for my first two graduate classes. Those three weeks were busy, intense and incredibly demanding – and I loved every minute of it. I was more than happy to spend hours everyday in the library reading, researching and writing because I was truly engaged in what I was learning; the content was interesting, the work was challenging and the learning was relevant to me. It was these realizations that lead me to investigate how to create a dialogic classroom that authentically engages students instead of just trying to entertain them.

**To question best practices.**

As a classroom teacher, I am constantly told what to do and how to do it by outside influences – the principal, the superintendent, the Ministry of Education – and then I am questioned on what I am doing by students, parents and community members. What I realized over the last two years is that too often educators implement new practices without examining or questioning why they are implementing them. Part of the reason for this lack of questioning may be because many teachers and policy makers do not examine the theory behind what they are doing. I make this statement because I was one of them. Because I no longer do it, I will admit that while I completed a lot of academic reading, I skipped over the section that explained the theory behind the research; I just wanted to know the results – what are the implications for my classroom and for me. I learned the danger of skipping parts of the research because the theoretical framework is the lens through which the research is viewed and it has major implications for what the results are actually telling me. Ignoring the theoretical framework is as dangerous as flipping through the explanation of how the study was conducted (another thing I was guilty of doing). I did not think it mattered if it was a qualitative or quantitative study, if

there were 4 participants or 400 participants, or if the researcher observed the participants one time or daily for a year. By learning about research methods, specifically Creswell's (2012) five qualitative approaches to inquiry, I was able to understand not only that this information is important, but that it determines the validity of those results I was always so anxious to get to.

These understandings are ones that I never would have come to if I had not become a graduate student, so they are ones I worry many classroom teachers do not have either. With these understandings, I am now re-evaluating a lot of the policies and programs that I am being asked to implement in my classroom. Although many contain solid concepts, that does not mean they should be accepted without critical thought. I have learned that not only do I have the right to question what I am being told are best practices, but also that I have a responsibility to do so.

### **Now What?**

All of these my learning will make me a better teacher. The personal realizations will help me better understand and relate to my students and the professional understanding will help me better plan and implement practices in my classroom. All of these experiences, both personal and professional, were the inspiration for this project and for the *Perspectives* unit. While the unit is a practical piece that I can take and teach tomorrow, it is also representative of the ideas I will value moving forward: learning is transactional, moving away from the all-knowing expert, reflecting on social practices and valuing all experiences.

**Learning is transactional.**

Gee (1989), Vygotsky (1978), and Rosenblatt (1986; 1994a; 1994b) all argued that the person and the knowledge are not separate entities that exist independently but rather that, through interactions with texts and with other people, knowledge is created. Rosenblatt (1986, 1994a, 1994b) argued that all linguistic activities are transactional and, as Gee (1989) also stated, each person comes to an event with his/her own understanding that will influence how he/she experiences that event. Vygotsky (1978) furthered these ideas by arguing that all learning, not just interactions with text, is social. This social constructivist view states that learning is an active process during which learners construct knowledge through dialogic interactions with the environment, with themselves, and with others (Almasi & Garas-York, 2009; Smagorinsky, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). A teacher in a dialogic classroom creates an environment reflective of these ideas because students are not only allowed, but also encouraged, to contribute their own understandings, interpretations and experiences to the conversation in an effort to co-construct knowledge between students and teacher (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Wells & Arauz, 2006).

The unit in Chapter 3 represents these ideas in several ways. First, while the students are asked to answer a series of questions on their chosen novel, there is no one right answer to these questions. Students are asked and encouraged to bring their own knowledge, understanding, and experiences to the reading of their novel and use these personal perspectives to help form their responses. Second, once the students are confident in their use of dialogic learning skills, the students are the ones generating the questions. This shows that the teacher values each student's personal perspective and

individual experience with reading the text by acknowledging that each student's unique experience will generate different questions. Third, each student's previous experiences and current personal preferences are acknowledged in this unit by offering students' choice in the portfolio assignments they choose to complete. While there is a necessary structure to the requirements of the unit, within that structure students choose which novel they will study, which assignments they will complete to demonstrate their understanding of the novel and of dialogic learning skills, and what timeline they will follow to complete these tasks.

Rosenblatt (1994b) argued that "meaning" is not waiting in the text to be found, or in the reader for that matter, but that it comes "into being during the transaction between the reader and the text" (p.1063). Barnes (2008) suggested that this meaning could also come into being in the transaction between students when they are using exploratory talk. Barnes (2008) suggested that exploratory talk "enables the speaker to try out ideas, to hear how they sound, to see what others make of them, to arrange information and ideas into different patterns" (Barnes, 2008, p. 4). The *Perspectives* unit described in Chapter 3 encourages students to engage in exploratory talk through the use of talk tickets, student discussion days, and teacher modeling. Once a teacher acknowledges that the meaning is not in the text waiting to be found, but rather must be created through interactions, he/she must then also acknowledge that he/she cannot be the keeper of the right answer.

### **Moving away from the all-knowing expert.**

A dialogic classroom requires that teachers and students co-construct knowledge and understanding through dialogue (Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Wilkinson & Son Hye, 2011). Historically, however, classrooms have operated on a transmission model of instruction

in which teachers do not construct meaning with students but instead tell students what they should know and then test them on it to make sure they know it (Wells & Arauz, 2006). As described in Chapter 2, this method of testing is often done through the use of IRE or IRF questioning models (DeWitt & Hohenstein, 2009; Wells & Arauz, 2006). Teaching from a dialogic stance requires a shift in the purpose of questioning which is reflective of a shift in power. Questions are no longer asked to test students recall of information given by the teacher, but are asked to encourage students to examine their own thoughts, and those of others; to find solutions to problems; to understand concepts on a deeper level; or to create new understandings (DeWitt & Hohenstien, 2009; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013; Wells & Arauz, 2006). This shift in the purpose of questioning also means a shift in who is asking the questions.

Since the purpose of questioning in a dialogic classroom is to assist students in generating new ideas and reflecting on those ideas, students must also be encouraged to generate questions. In order for this change in who is asking the questions to happen the teacher must be willing to give up the role of “all-knowing expert” (Fisher & Larkin, 2010; Lyle, 2008; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Sosa & Sullivan, 2013). As Aukerman’s (2007) study showed, even by fifth grade students interact with each other with the understanding that the teacher has the right answer. The students in the study were willing to participate in a discussion with one another, but were always looking to their teacher to make sure they had come up with the right answer. Only when the teacher refuses to fill the role of “all-knowing expert” can students truly step into the void left and start constructing knowledge for themselves (Aukerman, 2007; Buty & Mortimer, 2008).

The unit I created represents the move away from the all-knowing expert most obviously in the way the novel studies are structured. When students begin studying their novels, the teacher is still filling the all-knowing role for them, to some degree, by providing the questions for them to answer, but he/she has already started to subtly remove him/herself from this role by encouraging students to generate the answers to these questions through discussion with their group mates. Nowhere in the unit does the entire group read through their chapter questions and mark them right or wrong based on the answer that the teacher provides. Once students become more comfortable with this subtle shift, then the all-knowing expert is removed entirely and ideally, students generate their own questions, discuss their own answers, and moderate their own student-led discussions.

**Reflecting on social practices.**

Shifting who holds power in the classroom by releasing the idea of the teacher as the “all-knowing expert” can be extremely difficult. One of the reasons this can be difficult is that most schools are traditionally structured around “middle-class mainstream” discourse (Gee, 1989, p.11). In this discourse, there is a specific way of speaking, acting and interacting that requires the teacher to be the one who holds the power and the knowledge (Gee, 1989; Fisher & Larkin, 2010). As Gee (1989) explains, when a person is fully fluent in a discourse it is often difficult for him/her to reflect on it because he/she is not conscious of everything that he/she is doing within that discourse. In order to change this structure in classrooms, it is necessary that teachers become conscious of this discourse and reflect on all the social practices within their classrooms.

Unfortunately, one of the qualities of traditional school settings is that they are not structured to learn from student voices (O'Connell Schmakel, 2008), but in order for co-construction of knowledge to happen, student voices must be valued. One of the ideas teachers need to reflect on is their own bias when it comes to talk in the classroom. Many teachers see talk in the classroom negatively, either because of their own experiences as a student (Fisher, 2010) or because of the pressure they feel to get through everything (Hall, 2007). However, in order to stop students from simply being compliant workers who finish the necessary paperwork on time teachers must overcome these biases.

The *Perspectives* unit is built around the idea of valuing and learning from student voices. One of the most prominent ways this valuing of students voices is demonstrated is in the final projects students are required to complete. Students choose their own way to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding they have created in this unit. Students also participate in fishbowl discussions to show their understanding of the big ideas in the unit and their use of dialogic learning skills.

Another bias many teachers need to overcome is their opinions about silence in the classroom. Ollin (2008) stated that in classrooms “cultural bias towards talk means that silence is commonly perceived negatively” (p. 265). With the IRE/IRF modes of questioning, silence is often interpreted as a lack of understanding. Teachers themselves may be uncomfortable with silence because of their perception that teachers should ask students to show their understanding by talking (Ollin, 2008). Instead of interpreting silence as a lack of understanding, teachers need to understand that it may be a cultural practice or it may be a conscious choice by the student to utilize more time to think about and develop a response. By overcoming their own biases when it comes to power and

talk in the classroom, teachers can move towards valuing what all students bring to the classroom, which is one of the key components of a dialogic classroom.

**Valuing all experiences.**

Gee's (1989) theory of discourse/Discourse states that each student enters a classroom with a set of skills, experiences, ways of speaking, ways of acting, beliefs and values. Uptake is a key skill for students to learn in order to be active members in a dialogic classroom, but it is also a way for them to show respect for one another's ideas. By teaching students to listen, connect and respond to each other's ideas, instead of merely waiting for their turn to speak, students are also learning that every person's ideas are worth considering (Chiaravelli, 2010). Students are taught how to interact with one another this way through the use of talk tickets in the *Perspectives* unit. One of the strongest influences on student engagement is that students feel valued in their classroom (O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). Valuing what each student brings to the conversation does not, however, require teachers to adopt an every-answer-is-right kind of attitude.

As Rosenblatt (1994b) explained, just because there is no 'right' answer does not mean that anything goes and any response is equally valid. Rosenblatt (1994b) argued that, instead, it is important to develop a set of criteria to evaluate the validity of an answer or response. Adopting this concept also helps teachers create another aspect of classroom culture that is important to student engagement - challenging all students (O'Connell Schmakel, 2008). Adopting these ideas enables teachers to challenge all students by requiring that each one be accountable for his/her own learning and be prepared to bring his/her own ideas to the conversation. Since all students were part of the process of developing the criteria for a valid response, each student is equally as

responsible for making sure his/her own answers meet those criteria. One of the most difficult aspects to implement in the *Perspectives* unit was determining how to keep students accountable when they are working in independent groups. I knew that simply collecting all the students' chapter questions and marking them was not an option as that would be in complete opposition to the message I was trying to create in the dialogic classroom. Instead, the unit is designed so that the students are accountable for themselves by being accountable to their group members. There is very little independent work in this unit and while this level of collaboration requires even more accountability from each student, it also allows the students to work together and support and help one another to ensure that everyone is completing the work and engaging in the learning opportunities.

### **Final steps**

In discussing my project with colleagues, it has become very clear that most of them are not familiar with dialogic teaching practices but are very interested in learning more about them. As a result, I have started discussing the possibility of collaborating with one of the Good Spirit School Division's literacy coaches to create a professional development workshop on dialogic teaching and learning. I am excited about this prospect because I believe that, even though this project was a huge undertaking, I have only scratched the surface of all there is to learn and understand about creating a dialogic classroom.

When I decided to start this journey a colleague told me that I would love it but that graduate studies would finally "cure" me of my desire to be a professional student. I am happy to say she was only half correct. This experience has been incredible and one that

I have truly enjoyed but, if anything, it has reminded me how much I truly love to learn.

The completion of this project will be celebrated with a much-needed break, but I will not be surprised when, a few years from now, the desire to become a student reappears.

When it does, I will gladly embark on the next phase of my education adventure.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A – Anticipation Guide

Unit: Perspectives

### Anticipation Guide

For each statement in the chart, mark an A if you agree or a D if you disagree.

Statements	Start of Unit	End of Unit
There are no bad people, only bad choices.		
All Germans during WWII were Nazis.		
Nazis were completely evil.		
I make my own choices. If I don't feel a certain way there's no way other people can convince me otherwise.		
Being a good person is more important than following the rules.		
Good always triumphs over evil.		
If I saw someone doing something cruel to someone else, I would speak up to help.		
Evil is easy to identify.		
My personal feelings about a situation influence the way I would report what happened.		

Based on the above statements, what kind of predictions/thoughts/questions can you make on what this unit will be about?

**K/W**

**What do you Know on the topic?**

**What do you Want to know?**

**Know**

**Want to know**

**What I know from A-Z**

**A**

**B**

**C**

**D**

**E**

**F**

**G**

**H**

**I**

**J**

**K**

**L**

**M**

**N**

**O**

**P**

**Q**

**R**

**S**

**T**

**U**

**V**

**W/X/Y/Z**

Based on the Anticipation Guide, my chosen pre-unit brainstorm, and discussions, some questions that I would like to answer are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Next steps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Now I Know:

## Appendix B – Research Project

Unit: Perspectives

### **Assignment:** WWII Research Project

In order to better understand the novels you are going to study, you will be doing a research project on certain aspects of WWII.

You need to answer three major questions – what those questions are is up to you. If you know a lot about WWII, you might want to look at specific details, military strategy, or obscure stories. If you have little background knowledge on WWII, you may just be researching the major ideas of the war.

You will create a poster that shows what you learned through your research.

You need to **verify** your information from *at least* 3 different sources. You need to cite these sources on your poster. Your sources can be online or print. While you may use a source for more than one question, you need to have a **minimum** of 5 different sources. While you do not have to do a presentation of your poster, they will be displayed and used as references throughout the unit, so make sure the content is presented in a manner that is visually appealing, accurate, and legible.

### **Assessment:**

Pre-writing /5

Three guiding questions /3

Complete and accurate answers to each question /15

Information is presented IN YOUR OWN WORDS /5

3 sources for each answer, minimum 5 sources total /15

Poster contains graphics to enhance understanding /3  
(maps, pictures, graphs, and so on)

Overall presentation /4

Total: /50

## Appendix C – Same Invention

### Same Invention

#### Description 1

- It can come in many different shapes and sizes.
- It has been used to save lives.
- Its creation has changed our world.
- Its use ended a war.
- It created many jobs.

#### Description 2

- It can come in many different shapes and sizes.
- It has killed many people.
- Its creation cost billions of dollars.
- Its creation has changed our world.
- It is destructive to our Earth.

## Appendix D – Introduction to Novel Booklets

This introduction will be part of each novel booklet.

**Unit:** Perspectives

**Novel Study:**

### Big Questions:

(You will need to form a thorough answer to the two questions below by the end of the unit)

1. How does personal perspective influence how you experience an event?
2. Why is it important to consider all sides of a story before forming an opinion?

### Big Ideas:

(We will be examining and discussing the four ideas below throughout the unit. You need to form an opinion on these ideas and be able to *support that opinion with evidence* throughout the unit)

1. There are no bad people, only bad choices.
2. Other people cannot convince me to change my opinion.
3. Being a good person is more important than following the rules.
4. Evil is easy to identify.

### Unit Tasks:

1. WWII Research Project
  - Independently, you need to complete and present a research project on 3 major questions you have about WWII
2. Portfolio
  - As you work through your novels, you need to complete written assignments. The first draft of these assignments is to be kept in an individual writing portfolio. These first draft assignments will not be marked, but you will earn completion credit for each one (If you have 10 assignments throughout your book and you complete all 10, you earn 10/10.)
  - As you work through the unit, you will choose **3** of these first draft pieces to develop into good copies in the following formats:
    - Character Sketch
    - Persuasive/opinion piece
    - Informational essay
    - Newspaper article
    - Journal entries (5)

- These are personal reflection pieces and can be on any event or topic or issue at any point in the novel. A reaction to something you find interesting, enraging, exciting, etc.
- Visual
- Each good copy assignment will be marked on a 5 point scale, so the total portfolio mark will be out of 15
- Your portfolios are due (**all assignments**) at the end of the unit – you can choose to complete individual pieces (and I highly recommend that you do) at any point throughout the unit to avoid rushing to complete them all at the end

### 3. Book Club

- You will work through your novels in groups of 4-6
- You will work through stations as a group – meaning each day you will be doing one of the following tasks:
  - Reading aloud – student led
  - Reading aloud – teacher led
  - Reading independently
  - Working on chapter questions
  - Working on written assignments
  - Discussion Days
    - On these days, your group will discuss several questions/prompts/ideas from your novel. You can choose to discuss one or more of the chapter questions, the written assignments, or questions of your own that you have generated while working through the activities on the previous days
    - Since you will only be in this station one out of six days, you will draw on the activities you have done and the sections of your novel that you have read, in the previous five days
    - You will be expected to utilize the characteristics of dialogic discussion that you have learned in the previous lessons
    - You may use the Talk Tickets to help you engage in the discussion
- You will be assessed on your work and participation in each of these stations through self, peer and teacher rubrics

#### 4. Chapter Questions

- You will be given chapter questions to answer on the *first half* of your novel. I have created these questions and they vary in level of difficulty and thought required
- For the second half of your novel, you will create the discussion questions based on what you have learned about thin vs thick questions and your experience with the teacher-generated questions from the first section of your novel
- You need to create 2-5 questions for each chapter/section
- You need to have *written* answers for 2 questions for each chapter/section
- You are to use these questions on your group Discussion Days (mark the questions you use with a star)
- I will not mark all your chapter questions, but I will collect them periodically to ensure completion and mark sections

#### 5. Final Assessment

- You will participate in a fishbowl discussion to demonstrate your understand of the Big Ideas
- You will create a final project that represents your answers to the 2 Big Questions

#### 6. Outcomes

- We are focussing on the following outcomes in this unit:
- View critically and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of texts to locate and interpret key messages and details, to develop conclusions, opinions, and understanding
- Listen critically to understand, gather information, follow directions, form an opinion, and analyze oral presentations for diverse opinions, presenter's point of view, values, and biases, stereotypes, or prejudices.
- Read independently and show understanding of the main ideas and supporting evidence, explain connections between new ideas and information and previous thoughts, and recognize any biases or false reasoning.
- Use oral language to interact purposefully, confidently, and respectfully in a variety of situations including one-to-one, small group, and large group

discussions (expressing feelings and viewpoints and contributing to group harmony).

### **Chapter Questions**

- Answer all questions on loose leaf.
- Make sure all questions are clearly labelled and organized
- Answer all questions with complete thoughts and sentences
- Any vocabulary words should be completed **before** reading the chapter to help with understanding. You need to record a definition of the word that helps you understand its meaning. You can use context clues, look it up in a dictionary or online, or ask one of your group mates for assistance.
- Make sure you are looking ahead as you work through – some of the sections/chapters have pre-reading questions you will need to answer before you read
- All questions marked **Written** are to be completed on a separate piece of loose leaf and kept in your writing portfolio

## Appendix E – *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* booklet

- ❖ **OPTIONAL:** Because your novel is actually written as a diary, you have the option of completing an alternate writing assignment. You can choose to keep a personal journal throughout the course of your novel study. Your personal journal can include entries on anything you wish to write about, but should also include some references/reflections on the novel itself. Your final portfolio assignment would then be to choose 10 entries and make good copies of them to submit. Keep in mind that while your journal entries can be on anything, the point is to show your understanding /connections to the novel, so some entries should involve the novel in some way. You must still answer the written questions you are given, but they can also count as journal entries.

### June 14

1. Who is ‘you’ referring to?

### June 20

**Vocabulary:** unbosomings, capitulation, ardent, blithely, melancholy, albeit

1. Why does Anne decide to start writing in her diary?
2. Who is Kitty?
3. Why does she name her diary?
4. Discuss the Anti-Jewish decrees. Imagine how you would feel if you were Anne.

### June 21

**Pre-reading:** How do you feel when report cards are about to be sent home?

**Written:** You were caught talking in class and given the assignment to write a letter to your teacher, *convincing* her that talking in class is absolutely necessary. Compose this letter and put it in your writing portfolio.

### June 24-July 5

**Vocabulary:** tram, Zionist movement, superfluous

1. Why has Anne’s family been giving away their belongings?
2. Of your own belongings, what would be the most difficult to give away?  
Describe the belonging and why giving it away would be so difficult.
3. What does her father think it is time to do? Why?

**July 8-10**

1. Create a timeline showing the events from July 5-8
2. In your own words, give a brief description of the annex. Compare and contrast your description of the annex with those of the other group members. Discuss why they may be different.
3. Why did Anne travel separately from the rest of her family?

**Written:** If you had to leave your entire world behind and you could only take what would fit in a book bag, what would you take? Describe each item and explain why you would bring each.

**July 11**

**Vocabulary:** loathe, peculiar

1. Why is Anne so afraid of someone hearing them?

**August 14**

1. Why does Mr. Van Daan tell the upstairs neighbour a made-up story?
2. Refer to the Big Ideas for this unit and discuss the statements in the context of the current events in the novel. Does the context influence your opinion about each statement?

**September 2**

**Vocabulary:** hypochondriac, booty, waned, waxed (in context with waned), enthralling

1. How does Anne feel about Peter? How can you tell?
2. How long have they been together in the annex at this point? How are they getting along with one another? Give evidence to support your answer.

**Written:** Describe a time you wanted to do something and were told you were not allowed to. How did you feel/respond? What was the consequence?

**Sept. 21-28**

**Vocabulary:** ludicrous, lenient, minute, barbarism, unassuming

1. In your own words, retell the vegetable incident between Mr. Van Daan and Anne
2. Anne argues, “you only really get to know people when you’ve had a jolly good row (fight) with them. Then and only then can you judge their true characters” (p. 34). Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

**Sept. 29-Oct. 9**

**Vocabulary:** W.C., immorality, sabotage

1. How does Anne find out where her Jewish friends are being taken?
2. Why doesn’t Miep help the old woman?

3. Explain what the Germans are doing with hostages.

**Oct 16-29**

**Vocabulary:** vile, fascist, pious, oblige

1. Why might it be more concerning than usual if Anne's family got sick? What solutions might you suggest for them?

**Nov. 7**

**Vocabulary:** irritable, herald, rebuke, indifferent, skipper

1. Imagine you have been locked up with your family for 4 months. Can you empathize with how Anne might be feeling right now? Think of the characteristics of your own family members – what would start to bother you the most if you were in Anne's situation?

**Nov. 9-12**

**Vocabulary:** sufficient, congenial, entail

1. What is going on in the war at this point?
2. What makes them decide to take in an 8<sup>th</sup> person?
3. How do you think this action will change life in the annex?

**Nov 17-20**

**Vocabulary:** ingenuity, lorries, evading

1. What is the only way, besides hiding, that people are able to escape German capture?
2. What causes Anne to feel so deserted? (p. 55)

**Nov. 28**

**Vocabulary:** fortnight, pall, stodgy, fore/aft

**Written:** Have you ever felt so confused/overwhelmed that you are not even sure how to react? (whether to laugh or cry...or both). Describe this situation, what made you feel that way, and how you did react.

**Dec. 7-10**

**Pre-Reading:**

1. What is St. Nicholas Day?
  2. Who is Black Peter?
- 
1. According to Anne, how does Mrs. Van Daan injure her rib?
  2. In 4-5 sentences, describe the incident with Mrs. Van Daan's teeth.
  3. Why do you think Anne writes about Mrs. Van Daan so often?

**Dec. 13-Feb. 5**

1. Anne says she is becoming much more sensible. What do you think is causing this change in her character?

2. Do you agree with Anne that she is becoming more sensible or not? Give examples from the novel to support your answer.
3. Anne sympathizes with everyone suffering because of the war. Find and copy a quotation that supports this idea.
4. On pages 64-65 Anne is clearly upset about the way she is being treated. Do you think she is justified in feeling this way or is she over-reacting? Explain.

**Written:** Describe a time you were really excited to receive a particular gift. Anne is this excited to receive butter. Compare/Contrast your experience and Anne's.

### **Feb 27-March 25**

**Pre-reading:** Who are Churchill and Ghandi?

1. On pages 68-69, what evidence is there that Anne and her family are safe from the concentration camps while in hiding, but they are not protected from the war?
2. Why would it matter if soldiers had found the radio turned to England, even if they didn't find the annex?

### **March 27-April 2**

1. What is the timeline Rauter gives in his speech?
2. Anne and her mother have a very strained relationship. Looking at their interaction and Anne's reflection on April 2, do you think Anne is being stubborn and childish or do you think she is handling a difficult situation with maturity? Explain your answer with support from the novel.

### **April 27-May 18**

1. What are the two contrasting feelings we see Anne experiencing in this section?
2. What is going on that causes her to feel these conflicting emotions?
3. What are students being forced to do if they want to graduate or continue school?
  - a. What happens if the students refuse?
  - b. What would you choose?
  - c. Regardless of which decision they make, what is the long term consequence for Holland?

**Written:** The quotation "it's all relative" means that how we feel about anything depends on our own experiences. For example, 'cold' in Saskatchewan is very different than 'cold' in Mexico; 'rich' in the U.S. is very different than 'rich' in rural Africa. Explain how Anne acknowledges the relativity of point of view about her own experience. Include some examples that help clarify your answer – both from the novel and form your own understanding.

### **June 13-15**

1. At this point, how long has it been since Anne started writing in her diary?

2. Compare/contrast this birthday to her last birthday. How are the day, her life, Anne herself different?
3. Why does Anne call the radio their “source of courage”?

### **July 11-16**

1. What do the burglars steal?
2. What does this action say about the state of the country?

### **July 19-26**

1. Describe the conditions in North Amsterdam.
2. What is giving Anne hope amongst all the damage and despair?

**Written:** If you had been in hiding for an entire year, what would be the first thing you would want to do when you could come out and why?

### **July 29-Aug 9**

1. According to Anne, how does the rest of the family feel about Mrs. Van Daan?
2. Summarize an average day in the annex.

### **Aug 10-Sept.10**

1. List 5 ways that your life would be different if you had no way of telling time.
2. Why is everyone so excited that Italy has surrendered?

### **Sept. 16-Oct. 29**

1. Anne speaks often of the people who are helping them, but rarely acknowledges the risk they are taking to do so. Explain Elli’s role in this situation. Why do you think Elli has taken on this role?
2. We continue to see changes in Anne. Describe how she is feeling at this point in her journey. Make sure to include examples from the novel to support your answer.

You need to compose/create/complete the rest of the chapter questions and written assignments! Make sure you are still writing out the questions and answers in complete thoughts/sentences and that they are clearly labelled and organized.

Remember to put stars beside the questions you use on your Discussion Days.

## Appendix E – *Between Shades of Gray* booklet

**Lina is an artist, and describes a lot of what is going on through imagery. One of your portfolio assignments is to create a visual. You can choose to represent any one of the images that Lina presents, so make note of them when you come across one(s) that really appeal to you. If you are a person who enjoys expressing yourself through art, like Lina, you may also choose to create more visuals for your portfolio in place of other assignments. Please discuss with your teacher first.**

### Section 1: Thieves and Prostitutes

#### Chapters 1-6

**Vocabulary:** derogatory, bourgeois, writhing, annexation, surly, celluloid frames

#### Chapter 1

1. This novel has unique artwork on the front and back covers. Why do you think these images were chosen? What mood do they create?
2. Is this story being told in the past or present? How do you know? What is the name for this literary technique? How do you think this will enhance the telling of the story?

#### Chapter 2

1. Describe the mood/emotions created by the dialogue in this chapter?
2. How do you know that Lina is replaying a memory about the bread? Why do you think the author included this memory in the story?

**Portfolio:** Imagine you have 20 minutes to pack a suitcase before leaving your home forever. Create a list of the things you would take. Try packing the items into your bookbag. Were you able to fit everything you wanted to take? Take a picture of your packed bag – and all the things you wanted to put in it, whether they fit or not. How would you feel if you had to leave behind anything from the list that wouldn't fit? How would you decide what to take, especially if you didn't understand why you were packing or where you were going?

#### Chapter 3

1. Describe an example of foreshadowing on p. 12 and explain its significance.

#### Chapter 4

1. Of the characters introduced that would be travelling in the truck, which one do you find to be most disturbing? Why?

**Chapter 5**

1. What do we find out about Lina and her father in the memory she shares in this chapter?

**Chapter 6**

1. Why do you think Jonas's offer of his ruler make the old woman cry?
2. Picturing her sketchbook helps calm Lina. What does this action tell us about her?

**Portfolio:** Choose 1 of the following 2 options based on the line "I pictured a rug being lifted and a huge Soviet broom sweeping us under it" (p.23).

1. Draw a picture (life-like or cartoon) that represents this line.
2. Explain what Lina means by this line in the context of the novel and what you know to be going on in this time period.

**Chapter 7-13**

**Vocabulary:** pandemonium, palpable, rubles

**Chapter 7**

1. Knowing what *pandemonium* means, and that it is a term you will come across in the next section, make a prediction as to what you think will happen in this next section.
2. Based on the actions of those involved, what can you infer Lina's mother is saying to the officer?

**Chapter 8**

1. Mother assures Lina that they will not be in the cars for long. Do you think this statement is true? Why/why not?

**Chapter 9**

1. The author uses a lot of descriptive language to 'paint the picture' of what it is like in the train car. Quote 2 examples and explain how this descriptive language helps create a picture in your mind.

**Chapter 10**

1. Quote the metaphor Lina uses at the beginning of Chpt 10. What mood does the metaphor create?
2. Why does Lina share this particular memory at this time? What effect does it have?

**Chapter 11**

1. Draw a brief timeline of the events in this chapter.
2. Do you think Lina will be reunited with her father? Why/why not?

**Chapter 12**

1. Why do you think Mr. Stalas refuses the piece of ham?

**Chapter 13**

1. What do we learn in the memory shared at the end of the chapter? What does this memory help Lina realize?

**Chapters 14-21**

**Vocabulary:** partisan, curdled, pendulum, abyss

**Chapter 14**

1. What do you think happened to Andrius? What makes you think that?

**Chapter 15**

1. Using evidence from the chapter, describe the current mood in the train car.

**Chapter 16**

1. Briefly describe the incident that Lina remembers with her teacher. What triggers this memory and why is it significant?

**Chapter 17**

1. What does Lina see happening when she jumps out of the train? What inference can you make about the conditions in the train cars based on what Lina sees?

**Written:** Lina describes two contrasting ideas about the rain in this chapter. Choose a particular type of weather (snow, rain, heat, cold) and think of what might cause people to feel differently about it. (For example, a snowboarder would love the snow and a surfer would hate it.)

**Chapter 18**

1. Why do you think Jonas would keep track of the number of children who died?
2. What does Mother find out from the train full of soldiers? Knowing what you do about the Germans during WWII, why do you think the people would be happy about them taking over Lithuania?

**Chapter 19**

1. What does the bald man say about the Germans? Do you think he is right? What makes you think this?
2. Quote the line Lina uses to describe the deep sadness she feels. Do you think this use of poetic language is more effective than saying ‘she was sad’? why/why not?
3. The memory Lina shares in this chapter does not seem to connect as clearly to the events around it as the others she has shared to this point. What might be the point of including this memory, at this time?

**Chapter 20**

1. Why do think Ona would rather drop her baby down the bathroom hole instead of handing it over to the guards?
2. Why does Lina get angry about it?

**Chapter 21**

1. Describe the two events that Lina shares in this chapter? How do they create contrast with the mood in the train car to this point?
2. The two events in this story are drastically different from what has been going on so far. Why do you think the author would include them at this point?

**Chapters 22- 28**

**Vocabulary:** bayonet, atrophy, deloused, decrepit,

**Chapter 22**

1. How is the children's reaction to the bucket of slop different this time than it was the first time in Chapter 13? What does this tell you about the transition the children are going through?

**Chapter 23**

1. Lina says her group debated whether they wanted to be bought or not. Make a pro/con list suggesting 3 arguments for either side.

**Chapter 24**

1. Explain why you think Lina's father is so angry in the memory?

**Chapter 25**

1. Why do the Lithuanians not run away?

**Chapter 26**

1. What happens when they get off the trucks? What emotions do you think the women are feeling as they are forced through this process?

**Chapter 27**

1. Considering the situation they just endured, why do you think both Jonas and Andrius looked and felt better?
2. What comfort do you think Lina's vow to continue writing and drawing whenever she had the chance will bring her?

**Chapter 28**

1. What will Lina and her family have to do in this new place? Knowing how they used to live in Lithuania, how do you think the family will handle the work?

**Section 2: Maps and Snakes****Chapters 29-31**

**Vocabulary:** leered, preferential,

**Chapter 29**

1. List two adjectives that would describe the contrast between their current situation and Lina's memory (one adjective for each situation) and describe why these adjectives would be the best descriptors for each situation.
2. Mother does not tell Lina what the commander wanted, but based on her body language, what do you think it might have been? Give examples from the text.

**Chapter 30**

1. What did the commander want Mother to do? Why would she turn it down?

**Written:** When Lina opens her tablet of writing paper she finds the letter she started writing to Joana the night they were taken and the chapter ends with the line "but my hand began to move" (p. 116). Compose the letter you think Lina is writing to Joana.

**Chapter 31**

1. Throughout the novel, Lina's memories show a stark contrast to her current situation. Quote 2 lines from this chapter, one from her current life and one from the memory, and explain how they represent this contrast.

**Chapters 32-34**

**Vocabulary:** treacherous, convulsed, revulsion

**Chapter 32**

1. List the Russian words Lina has learned and what they mean. Why are these words important for Lina's survival?
2. Why do you think Mother turned down the offer to work for the NKVD?

**Chapter 33**

1. Quote the *personification* that Lina uses to describe her hands. How do these few words add to the mood of the chapter?
2. Try and answer Lina's question, "What did Joana know about the boys and their meeting that [Lina] didn't?" (p. 128).

**Chapter 34**

1. Lina is shocked when her mother suggests they will still be there come winter. What does this tell you about Lina's understanding of their situation?
2. Look up something that weighs the equivalent of 300g. Using this measurement, try and estimate how many grams of food the average Canadian teenager eats in a day.

**Written:** Think of a food you find absolutely disgusting. Imagine you are in conditions that are so bad, you are now excited to eat that food. Describe the food, the situation and how you feel about your circumstances.

**Chapters 35-37****Chapter 35**

1. How would you describe Andrius's responses to Lina? Why do you think he is acting in this way?
2. What do you think this memory might be *foreshadowing* and why?

**Chapter 36**

1. What are the three things listed on the document they are supposed to sign? Why do you think the NKVD wants them to sign a document stating these things?
2. What is Mr. Lukas's argument as to why they will not be killed? Do you think this is a valid argument?

**Chapter 37**

1. Who do you think translated the letter? Give evidence for your inference.
2. Compare Komorov and Kretsky so far. What do you think of the 2 officers? Give evidence from the novel for your assessment of each man.

**Chapters 38-40****Chapter 38**

1. Describe what Lina sees between her Mother and Andrius. What do you think is happening?
2. What does Lina realize about Andrius and his mother?

**Chapter 39**

**Written:** Lina's mother tells her they should be grateful that Andrius is being treated better than they are. If you were in Lina's position do you think you could feel this way or would you be bitter and angry like her? Why is it sometimes hard for people to be happy for others when they are not happy themselves?

**Chapter 40**

1. Consider Mother's advice and the memory Lina shares in this chapter. How do you think she is feeling about Andrius? Give examples from the novel.

**Chapters 41-45**

**Vocabulary:** epitome, uproot

**Chapter 41**

1. How does Lina get through the torture being inflicted on her? How would you cope if you were in Lina's situation?
2. Why does Mother write letters to Papa even though she can not send them?

**Chapter 42**

1. Papa says “we’re dealing with two devils who both want to rule hell” (p. 168). What does this statement mean? Does this statement turn out to be true? Explain.

**Chapter 43**

1. Why does Mother shout the request out to the women in the field instead of directing it to Lina?
2. What does Lina agree to and why?

**Chapter 44**

1. Explain what Lina drew. Why do you think they are having her draw this?

**Chapter 45**

1. Why does Lina go to Andrius and his mother? What has made her change her mind about them?
2. What is the significance of the memory Lina shares in this chapter?

**Written:** What effect did drawing Mrs. Arvydas have on Lina? Think of something in your own life that helps you calm down and describe how and why this calms you.

You need to compose/create/complete the rest of the chapter questions and written assignments! Make sure you are still writing out the questions and answers in complete thoughts/sentences and that they are clearly labelled and organized.

Remember to put stars beside the questions you use on your Discussion Days.

## Appendix F – *Milkweed* booklet

### Chapters 1 & 2

1. How do you learn the narrator's name? Do you think this is his actual name? Explain.
2. What are the earliest memories described in this brief chapter?

### Chapter 3

**Pre-reading:** how did the Nazi's release Jewish men shown in the propaganda?

Find a picture of a traditional Jewish man.

**Vocabulary:** babka

1. What is the narrator's response when he's asked if he is a Jew? Why might this response be significant?
2. One of the boys says "there's a difference" between Jews and Gypsies (p. 8) – what is this distinction important?

### Chapter 4

1. What is the simile the narrator uses to describe the bombed-out buildings? How does this use of poetic language help you picture the scene?
2. Uri asks the narrator if he has ever had a bath (p. 11). How does Uri know that he has not? What does the fact that he has never bathed tell us about the narrator and his circumstances?

### Chapter 5

1. Why might the air raid sirens have been silent the day of the 'parade'?
2. The narrator is in awe of the Jackboots. Quote one of the lines that he uses to describe them and explain why you think he is awed by them.

### Chapter 6

1. Who are the men that are being tormented?
2. Who was Jozef? Why do you think the author would include this detail about Uri? What significance might it have to the story?

### Chapter 7

1. The narrator asks if the tanks are gone, what is the response? What do you think this means?
2. What names does Uri give the narrator? Give the 5 main details of the background Uri makes up for him. How do you think being given this history makes the narrator feel?

## Chapter 8

**Pre-reading: Written** –explain some of the traditions/rituals of children’s birthday parties

1. When Misha attends Janina’s birthday party, why does he steal the cake?
2. Misha comments that the windows above the shops, where people lived, were dark and silent. Why do you think these people did not speak out or come and help the others in the street?

## Chapter 9

1. There is an immediate change in mood at the beginning of this chapter. Quote 2 lines that show this change and explain why you chose them.
2. The last line of the chapter is “that was how it started”. Make a prediction, what do you think this means?

## Chapter 10

1. Who shoots at Misha? Why?
2. Outline the beliefs the boys express about angels (p. 47) – who believes what? What does Misha want to believe in?

**Written:** Why do you think Misha wants to believe this so badly?

## Chapter 11

**Pre-reading:** How did people heat their homes in WWII?

1. Give an example of how Uri and Misha’s circumstances are changing. What does this say about the world around them?
2. Uri, and later Misha, find black pearls and give them to the orphanage. What are black pearls? What kind of person do you think Uri is for giving black pearls to the orphanage? Explain.

## Chapter 12

1. What do you think happened to Janina’s family?
2. Why do you think Uri tells Misha to be “invisible” (p. 58)?

## Chapter 13

1. Describe how the other boys and girls treat Misha after he is thrown off the merry-go-round? Why do you think they treat him this way? Can you think of a time in your life when you saw people behave in a similar way?
2. When Misha tells Doctor Korczak about the merry-go-round, Doctor Korczak says “They’re *children. Children*” (p. 63). What do you think he means by this comment?

## Chapter 14

1. Does the lack of evidence about the broken horse on the merry-go-round stop the people from finding a suspect? Explain.

2. Why do they automatically think it is a Jew? Consider the phrase “They found the Jew. Or should I say, they found *a* Jew. Jews were interchangeable” (p. 66). What does this scene tell us about the atmosphere in the city and people’s attitudes?

### Chapter 15

1. Create a timeline of the major events in the novel up to this point.
2. What is actually going on with the ‘parade’ that Misha is watching?

**Written:** Imagine you are either watching the ‘parade’, or one of the people forced to be in the ‘parade’. Describe what you see, hear, taste, smell and feel.

### Chapter 16

1. What does Janina’s mother mean when she says “I was a human being once” (p. 76)?
2. What did Janina’s father, Mr. Milogron do for a living? What impact do you think this will have on their life in the ghetto?

**Written:** Imagine if your entire family was forced out of the home you are in now and made to live in a tiny, dirty apartment – all in one room. Consider some of the following questions in your response: How would you feel? What would you miss the most about your current home? How do you think each member of your family would react?

### Chapter 17

**Vocabulary:** mocking

1. Who do you think turned-in the boys in the stable? Give 2 reasons to support your inference.
2. What kind of work do Janina’s parents do now that they live in the ghetto? How is this symbolic of the changes in their lives?

### Chapter 18

**Vocabulary:** Typhus

1. What can Misha see that no one else can? What do you think this means?
2. What do you think happened to the shoes and socks of the people on the street?

### Chapter 19

1. Name 3 unusual sources of food people have to use. What could lead people to eating these alternative forms of food?
2. The scene at Janina’s house is disgusting – but the author must have included it for a purpose. What do you think the purpose of including this scene is?

**Written:** Choose 1 of the following options:

1. You are the author of this novel and your editor wants you to take out the scene in Janina’s house because he thinks it is too graphic and repulsive.

Write a persuasive letter to your editor arguing why it is necessary to the story.

2. You are the editor and you are trying to convince the author to remove this scene from his novel. Write a persuasive letter to the author explaining why you think it should be removed.

### **Chapter 20**

1. Describe the way Janina acted with the piece of pickled herring. Why do you think she acted like this?
2. When the Jackboot passes Misha, Misha makes a comment that shows the reader he still does not really understand what is going on. Quote the line and explain how it shows Misha's misunderstanding.

### **Chapter 21**

1. Who are the Flops? Explain how you think the other Jews felt toward the Flops.
2. Why would Jews be willing to do this job?

### **Chapter 22**

**Written/Research:** There was news throughout the ghetto about Himmler coming. Who is Himmler?

Compose a newspaper article about Himmler's visit to the ghetto.

You need to compose/create/complete the rest of the chapter questions and written assignments! Make sure you are still writing out the questions and answers in complete thoughts/sentences and that they are clearly labelled and organized.

Remember to put stars beside the questions you use on your Discussion Days.

## Appendix G – *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* booklet

### Chapter 1

1. List and describe the relationships of the characters we have met so far.
2. Knowing the setting and the characters we have met so far, what inferences can you make about Bruno’s family? Give evidence to support your inferences.
3. At this point, what do you think Bruno’s father does for a living? Support your inference with evidence from the novel.

### Chapter 2

1. How is the new house different from the one in Berlin? What do you think this contrast might symbolize or foreshadow?
2. Quote one line from this chapter that captures the mood of the new house and explain why you chose this line.
3. How does Bruno feel when he looks out the window? What do you think he sees?

**Written:** Describe a time when a decision was made for you that affected you but was out of your control. Explain the situation, the decision, how it made you feel and how you reacted.

### Chapter 3

1. According to Gretel, what is the name of the new house? What is her explanation for the name? Do you think she is correct?
2. Bruno says, “I don’t think the other children look at all friendly” – to whom do you think he is referring?
3. Look back at your answer to Chapter 2, question 4 – Do you think your prediction about what he sees is still correct? If so, why? If not, what would you change about your prediction?

### Chapter 4

1. Contrast the views from Gretel’s window and Bruno’s window. Describe the mood each view creates.
2. Why do you think Gretel tries so hard to come up with an explanation for what they are looking at?
3. Revisit your Chapter 2 prediction one more time – were you right? What do you now know that Bruno can see from his window? Quote 3 pieces of evidence that support this.

**Portfolio:** Draw the scene from Bruno’s window.

### Chapter 5

1. What is going on at the train station that Bruno doesn't quite understand?
2. What does Bruno think 'Heil Hitler' means? What does it actually mean?
3. What do these misunderstandings tell us about Bruno's understanding of what is going on around him?

**Written:** What does it mean when Father tells Bruno "They're not people at all...well at least not as we understand the term" (p. 53). How does this statement make you feel? Can you think of another example where one group of people thought this way about another group of people?

### Chapter 6

1. What realization does Bruno have about Maria?
2. Why do you think Maria tells Bruno he can't say how he feels and is so nervous about him speaking against Out-With and his Father?

**Written:** Maria thinks Father is a good man, while Bruno does not (at this moment). Which do you think Father is? Use examples from the novel so far to support your opinion.

### Chapter 7

tyre= tire

1. What do you think Mother means when she says "I'm afraid we'll be spending too much time talking about it soon"?
2. Who is Pavel? Who was he before? Why do you think Lt. Kotler speaks so harshly to him?
3. Bruno thinks it is very selfish for his mother to tell the Commandant (Father) she had cleaned the wound. Why do you think Mother tells the Commandant this?

### Chapter 8

**Pre-Reading discussion:** the results for Germany after WWI

1. Explain the argument that takes place at Christmas dinner

### Chapter 9

1. Bruno's comments about the striped pajama people show that he still does not understand what is going on. Give 3 quotations from this chapter that show this misunderstanding and explain why you chose them.
2. Why do you think Mother and Father would tell Bruno that exploration at Out-With is banned with No Exceptions?

### Chapter 10

1. Bruno confidently tells Shmuel that Germany is the greatest of all countries, but feels that the words do not sound quite right, even as he is saying them. Why might Bruno be starting to feel confused about statements like this one?

2. Do you think Bruno will finally get an answer to his question or do you think Schmuel is as confused about the whole situation as Bruno?

You need to compose/create/complete the rest of the chapter questions and written assignments! Make sure you are still writing out the questions and answers in complete thoughts/sentences and that they are clearly labelled and organized.  
Remember to put stars beside the questions you use on your Discussion Days.

## Appendix H – *The Boy Who Dared* booklet

### Pg. 3-top of 23

1. After reading the lines in *italics*, compose 3 questions or predictions.
2. Give 2 reasons why Helmuth wants to be a soldier. What do you think these memories are foreshadowing?
3. How do Opa and Oma feel about Hitler? How do you know?
4. What do you think this comment means: “Hitler’s just huffing and puffing” (p. 14)?
5. “Beneath the singing, Helmuth feels the drums. They stir his blood, call him to duty, make his legs long to leap away from the radio, and run down to the inner city to join the marchers” (page 21). How does this quote convey the sense of patriotism felt by Helmuth (and most of the people of Germany)? What adjectives would you apply to the feelings the author is conveying surrounding the parade? Explain why you chose these adjectives/

**Written:** Why do you think Opa doesn’t believe what Hitler is promising the German people? Do you think his opinion will cause conflict between him and Mutti? Explain.

### Pg. 23-38

1. “The Nazis will find him guilty, no doubt” Oma says about the arsonist (p. 27). What s troubling about this statement?
2. In your own words, explain why more people are voting for Hitler.
3. What do you think of the way Herr Zeiger treats Benno? (pp. 28-30) If you were in this class watching this happen, how would you feel? What would you do?
4. Why would Herr Seligmann wear his lieutenant’s uniform to wash his store windows? What happens to him when he does? Do you think he knew this would be the consequence?
5. How does the treatment of the Jews reflect the mood of the story?
6. Why should the burning of all non-German books be worrisome to people? (p. 34)

**Written:** This written response will require you to do some research. Book banning was a way for the Nazi’s to promote their pro-German, anti-Jewish beliefs, but this is not the only example of restricting reading in history. Find 5 examples of banned books in the last 10 years. Explain what the book was, where it was banned from, and why.

### Bottom of p.38-top of 51

1. Describe Mutti’s new boyfriend. What is your initial opinion of him?
2. “Thanks to the Fuhrer, every German can afford a new radio. All of Germany can tune in the Fuhrer” (p. 39). What are the limitations of the new radio? What are the implications of this?

3. What does Helmuth think of Hugo? Why?
4. Why is Helmuth bothered by the drowning soldier in the picture *Fulfilling His Last Duty* shown by Herr Vinke in class?
5. Describe the two opposing views in the argument between Gerhard and Hugo. How does this argument illustrate the differences in these two men? Explain these differences.

**Written:** What idea does Helmuth decide to focus his homework on? Does he agree with what he is writing? Explain.

### **Top of 51-66**

1. Describe how you would feel if you were required by law to join the Hitler Youth group?
2. Helmuth seems to have conflicting feelings about Jungvolk? Describe what Helmuth sees as the positive and negative aspects of Jungvolk.
3. What do Helmuth and Rudi name their detective agency? What is the significance of this name and what do you think it foreshadows?
4. Why does Helmuth feel uneasy after he gives Becker the name of their suspect?
5. Helmuth tells himself “surely he hasn’t accused an innocent man. Surely Inspector Becker would not allow that to happen” (p. 64). Do you agree? Explain.

### **Pages 67-middle of 78**

1. What does Helmuth mean when he says “He knows that prisoners will say anything, admit to anything to make the torture stop” (p. 67)?
2. What does Mutti mean when she says, “Silence is how people get on sometimes” (p. 72)? How does Helmuth see this in his own behaviour?
3. Helmuth “turns, catches his reflection in the window, loathes the silent German who stares back at him” (p. 73). What does this quotation mean? Why does Helmuth feel such loathing? Who does he feel it for?
4. How is The Hitler Youth different than the Jungvolk? How does this difference influence Helmuth’s feelings about being part of this type of organization?
5. What causes Helmuth to cry “I love Germany, but this makes me hate it!” (p. 77)

**Written:** How would you answer Helmuth’s questions, “How can he be expected to obey a law that feels so wrong? To obey a leader who strips away one freedom after another?” What advice would you give Helmuth if he came to you with these questions?

### **Middle of 78-middle of 90**

Portfolio: Copy the Cause and Effect chart below onto a piece of loose leaf and complete. For the blank rows, choose your own cause/effect that fits chronologically. Then answer the written question that follows it.

Cause	Effect
January 30, 1933, Hitler is sworn in as the leader of the new National Socialist Party	
	Herr Vinke assigns extra homework
Helmuth begins listening to BBC broadcasts	

**Written:** Explain how these cause/effect relationships progress the story forward

1. What does Rudi claim is Hitler's motivation for not stopping the invasions? Do you think he is right? Why/Why not?
2. Why do you think Helmuth acts the way he does when they encounter the Hitler Youth? What changes can you start to see in Helmuth?
3. Why are the boys shocked by Brother Worbs' prayer?
4. "You can think whatever you want," says Helmuth to Brother Worbs. "But be careful what you say" (p. 89). What warning is Helmuth trying to give Brother Worbs with these words?
5. Helmuth describes conflicting emotions in the last paragraph of this section. What are the different emotions he is experiencing? What is causing him to feel this way?

The rest of the chapter questions and written assignments are up to you to compose/create/complete! Make sure you are still writing out the questions and answers in complete thoughts/sentences and that they are clearly labelled and organized. Remember to put stars beside the questions you use on your Discussion Days.

## Appendix I – Sample Book Club Schedule

### Book Club Schedule (Sample)

For each day:

1. identify which of the 6 stations you will be in
2. if it is a reading day, identify which section of your book you will be covering

February

<b>3</b> <b>Day 1</b> Teacher led Chpt 1-2	<b>4</b> <b>Day 2</b> Student led Chpt 3-4	<b>5</b> <b>Day 3</b> Chpt questions 1-4	<b>6</b> <b>Day 4</b> Indept. Reading Chpt 5-6	<b>7</b> <b>Day 5</b> Written assign
<b>10</b> <b>Day 6</b> Discussion day	<b>11</b> <b>Day 1</b> Teacher led Chpt 7-8	<b>12</b> <b>Day 2</b> Student led Chpt 9-10	<b>13</b> <b>Day 3</b> Chpt questions 5-10	<b>14</b> <b>Day 4</b> Independent reading Chpt 11-12
<b>February Break</b>	Work on written assign			
<b>24</b> <b>Day 5</b> Student led reading Chpt 13-14	<b>25</b> <b>Day 6</b> Discussion day	<b>26</b> <b>Day 1</b> Teacher led Chpt 15	<b>27</b> <b>Day 2</b> Student led Chpt 16-17	<b>28</b> <b>Day 3</b> Chpt questions 11-17

Day 1 – teacher led

Day 2 – reading – student led

Day 3 – working on chpt questions

Day 4 – reading independently

Day 5 – working on written assignments

Day 6 – Discussion Days

**Appendix J – Faithful Elephants Assignment***Faithful Elephants* –Portfolio Assignment

This book is a true story of what happened to the animals in the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo during WWII. However, it can also be read as a symbolic story of Jewish people in captivity.

How are the elephants like the people who were victims of Holocaust? (consider their circumstances, what caused them, who is responsible, their actions, and so on)

Are there any similarities between the Zoo keepers and the soldiers?

My ideas:

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My partner's ideas:

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My classmates' ideas:

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\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
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- \_\_\_\_\_  
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On a separate piece of loose leaf, consider all of those ideas and form your written response. As a *portfolio* assignment, you need to complete approximately 1 page of writing for a completion check mark. If you choose to develop it into a good copy later, this can be considered one of your marked assignments.

## Appendix K – Sample Assessments

### Portfolio Checklist – *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*

**Completion marks**(reminder, even though it is a rough draft, each assignment should be approximately 1 page to be considered complete)

	Assignment	Completion Date	In Folder ( X / √)
1	Faithful Elephants		
2	Letter to your teacher (June 21)		
3	Packing your bag (July 8-10)		
4	Sept 2		
5	Whether to laugh or cry (Nov. 28)		
6	“it’s all relative” (April 27-May 18)		
7	The first thing (July 19-26)		

Completion /7

**Portfolio Marks** [these assignments need to be taken all the way through the writing/composing process and each stage should be represented (copies of drafts). Since they are built on your completion assignments, they should be a **minimum** of 1 page in length]

- 1 – Not completed to standards set
- 2 – Below Grade level expectations
- 3 – Approaching grade level expectations
- 4 – Meeting grade level expectations
- 5 – Exceeding grade level expectations

Assignment	Date Completed	Mark
Character Sketch		/5
Persuasive/Opinion Piece		/5
Informational Essay		/5
Newspaper article		/5
Journal Entries		/5
Visual		/5

Portfolio Assignments Mark /15

Portfolio Checklist – *Between Shades of Gray*

**Completion marks**(reminder, even though it is a rough draft, each assignment should be approx. 1 page to be considered complete)

	Assignment	Completion Date	In Folder ( X / √)
1	Faithful Elephants		
2	Suitcase (Chapter 2)		
3	“I pictured a rug being lifted” (Chapter 6)		
4	Contrasting weather (Chapter 17)		
5	Disgusting Food (Chapter 34)		
6	Why is it hard to be happy for others? (Chapter 39)		
7	Drawing Mrs. Arvydas (Chapter 45)		

Completion /7

**Portfolio Marks** [these assignments need to be taken all the way through the writing/composing process and each stage should be represented (copies of drafts etc). Since they are built on your completion assignments, they should be a **minimum** of 1 page in length]

- 1 –Not completed to standards set
- 2 – Below Grade level expectations
- 3 – Approaching grade level expectations
- 4 – Meeting grade level expectations
- 5 – Exceeding grade level expectations

Assignment	Date Completed	Mark
Character Sketch		/5
Persuasive/Opinion Piece		/5
Informational Essay		/5
Newspaper article		/5
Journal Entries		/5
Visual		/5

Portfolio Assignments Mark /15

Portfolio Checklist – *Milkweed*

**Completion marks**(reminder, even though it is a rough draft, each assignment should be approx. 1 page to be considered complete)

	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>In Folder ( X / √)</b>
1	Faithful Elephants		
2	Misha's belief (Chapter 10)		
3	Description of the parade (Chapter 15)		
4	What would you miss? (Chapter 16)		
5	Choose 1 (Chapter 19)		
6	Research		

Completion /6

**Portfolio Marks** [these assignments need to be taken all the way through the writing/composing process and each stage should be represented (copies of drafts etc). Since they are built on your completion assignments, they should be a **minimum** of 1 page in length]

- 1 – Not completed to standards set
- 2 – Below Grade level expectations
- 3 – Approaching grade level expectations
- 4 – Meeting grade level expectations
- 5 – Exceeding grade level expectations

Assignment	Date Completed	Mark
Character Sketch		/5
Persuasive/Opinion Piece		/5
Informational Essay		/5
Newspaper article		/5
Journal Entries		/5
Visual		/5

Portfolio Assignments Mark /15

Portfolio Checklist – *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

**Completion marks**(reminder, even though it is a rough draft, each assignment should be approx. 1 page to be considered complete)

	Assignment	Completion Date	In Folder ( X / √)
1	Faithful Elephants		
2	Decision made for you (Chapter 2)		
3	Scene from Bruno’s window (Chapter 4)		
4	“They’re not people at all...” (Chapter 5)		
5	Maria’s thoughts on Father (Chapter 6)		

Completion /5

**Portfolio Marks** [these assignments need to be taken all the way through the writing/composing process and each stage should be represented (copies of drafts etc). Since they are built on your completion assignments, they should be a **minimum** of 1 page in length]

- 1 – Not completed to standards set
- 2 – Below Grade level expectations
- 3 – Approaching grade level expectations
- 4 – Meeting grade level expectations
- 5 – Exceeding grade level expectations

Assignment	Date Completed	Mark
Character Sketch		/5
Persuasive/Opinion Piece		/5
Informational Essay		/5
Newspaper article		/5
Journal Entries		/5
Visual		/5

Portfolio Assignments Mark /15

Portfolio Checklist – *The Boy Who Dared*

**Completion marks**(reminder, even though it is a rough draft, each assignment should be approx. 1 page to be considered complete)

	Assignment	Completion Date	In Folder ( X / √)
1	Faithful Elephants		
2	Opa's Doubt (P.3 – 23)		
3	Book Banning (p. 23-38)		
4	Helmuth's Homework (p. 38-51)		
6	Helmuth's Questions (p. 67-78)		
7	Cause and Effect Chart (p. 78-90)		

Completion /6

**Portfolio Marks** [these assignments need to be taken all the way through the writing/composing process and each stage should be represented (copies of drafts etc). Since they are built on your completion assignments, they should be a **minimum** of 1 page in length]

- 1 – Not completed to standards set
- 2 – Below Grade level expectations
- 3 – Approaching grade level expectations
- 4 – Meeting grade level expectations
- 5 – Exceeding grade level expectations

Assignment	Date Completed	Mark
Character Sketch		/5
Persuasive/Opinion Piece		/5
Informational Essay		/5
Newspaper article		/5
Journal Entries		/5
Visual		/5

Portfolio Assignments Mark /15

## Appendix L – Teacher-Led Days

As part of their book club stations, each group will have one day out of every six school days that they meet with the teacher. Following the characteristics necessary for the creation of a dialogic classroom, the teacher should structure this time in response to student needs. With that idea in mind, below are several suggestions of activities/assessments that could occur during teacher-led days.

1. Mini-lessons on any of the characteristics of dialogic discussion
2. Reiteration of the difference between thin and thick questions
  - a. the prompts to generate each type of question
  - b. the necessity of both and when to utilize which type of question
  - c. examples from the previous sections' chapter questions of both thick and thin questions
  - d. model the use of the talk tickets with the thick question prompts
3. Modelling effective use of dialogic discussion skills
4. Discussion of the group's schedule and activities and making sure all group members are staying accountable
5. Assessments of the use of dialogic discussion skills
  - Informal, teacher-student discussion on how each student is utilizing the different characteristics learned, how comfortable he/she feels using these skills, and goal setting for areas of improvement
  - Student self-assessment on his/her use of dialogic discussion skills
  - Teacher observation utilizing a simple checklist like the one below

<b>Dialogic Skill</b>	<b>Checkmark for each time the student demonstrated this skill</b>
contributed an answer/idea to the discussion	
invited someone into the discussion	
posed a question that generated discussion	
utilized uptake prompts	