

Analyzing EFL Literature Circle Discourse: Scaffolding with Five Story Elements

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In this paper, the authors describe a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of scaffolding as evidenced by discourse produced in EFL Literature Circles. Pre-intermediate and advanced learners in a Japanese university English program, who were surveyed and recruited, exhibited similar motivational profiles. These learners read and discussed different stories at appropriate levels. Discussion guidelines included analyzing 5 story elements. Transcripts of these discussions were coded according to Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) taxonomy of skills for interpreting fiction. Based on patterns in the resulting discourse, recommended objectives and scaffolding techniques for teaching literature discussion to pre-intermediate learners include using topical routines, encouraging shared leadership, and helping learners summarize series of key details and describe stated relationships. Advanced participants demonstrated an ability to discuss all 5 elements of story. Recommended objectives for advanced learners include selecting texts with more complex elements and using scaffolds that necessitate more elaborate inferential learner analysis.

本研究においては、EFLでのリテラチャー・サークルでの発話に見られる効果的補助の精査方法を開発した。ある日本の大学の英語科目で準中級および上級クラスに属する学習者が本研究に参加し、似たような動機プロフィールを示した。各レベルの学習者は異なる、各レベルに合った小説を読み、ディスカッションを行った。ディスカッションのガイドラインには物語の五要素分析が含まれていた。ディスカッションの写しは Hillocks and Ludlow (1984) の小説解釈方法に準じてコード化された。得られた談話分析のパターンに基づき、準中級レベルの学習者に対しては、目標設定やリーダーシップの共有、学習者間で物語の要点や人間関係の説明ができることを提示する。上級レベル学生は物語の五要素全てを議論することが可能であった。上級レベル学生に対しては、より複雑な要素の作品を選ぶことや、より巧緻な推論を可能にするような学習者補助を提案する。

IN THIS study, we developed a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of scaffolding as evidenced by the quality of verbal discourse produced in Literature Circles (LCs). We outline our approach to LCs and then explain how and why we decided to examine the discourse produced by learners in LCs before concluding with practical recommendations for LCs made on the basis of our research findings.

In April 2012, a four-member reading research team (the authors included) at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University implemented the first phase of an extensive reading program. The initial semester used short paper quizzes to evaluate our large reading classes. The second semester we introduced Moodle Reader (www.moodlereader.org). After two semesters, however, we felt something was lacking. We discussed the possibility of creating alternative activities for responding to graded readers and brought this idea to the reading research team. The authors



created a packet of alternatives that included both discussion and an introduction to the five elements of story: setting, character, plot, conflict, and theme (Sevigny & Berger, 2013). Action research by the authors led to the combining of both discussion and the five elements in a trial for the fall semester of 2013, which is reported here. A third member of the reading research team, Steven Pattison, taught the advanced course and the five elements module for advanced students.

Literature Circles: Literary Analysis, Scaffolding, and Reading Skills

To understand learners' discourse about literature, we developed a shared understanding of approaches to literary analysis, concepts of scaffolding, and taxonomies of reading skills for interpreting fiction. Teachers generally select from a variety of approaches to literary analysis, such as New Criticism, Stylistics, and Structuralism (Van, 2009). Teachers also choose and create numerous types of scaffolding. Moreover, learners choose what they share in an LC, and those contributions evidence levels and types of reading skills. These three research areas ground this study.

As a research team, we first wondered when and how language learners could become ready to analyze and discuss particular elements of story. We decided to use audio recordings of learner discussion as windows into our learners' comprehension of fiction texts and to determine what elements of literature our learners can articulate. We were attracted to this approach because it promised to illuminate the different processes and structures involved in negotiating meaning in LCs. Ironically, this is exactly why Van (2009) discounted Structuralism as an approach to teaching literature in EFL settings. Van claimed that Structuralism denies the role of personal responses in analyzing literature. To the contrary, we theorized that concrete topics

encourage low proficiency learners to share their personal responses and develop trust in their ability to both question and comment about a text, but we needed to learn more about how to support our learners in this endeavor. The five elements of story used for this study came from the Flocabulary hip hop video "Five Things" (Douthit, n.d.), which aligns with U.S. Common Core standards for grades 2 through 7. The five elements of story derive from a Structuralist approach to literary analysis.

The second area of research essential to this study is scaffolding. Scaffolding can be broken into five types relevant to LCs: graded readers, relationships, roles, routines, and responses. This concept originates from Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory and Bruner's (1978) coining of *scaffold* in reference to a framework provided by a mentor. First, this study assumes graded readers intrinsically contain some forms of scaffolding for learners. Second, Vygotsky (1934/1978) theorized that a teacher or classmate in a zone of proximal development is relationally situated to help a learner from an adjacent zone of development. In LCs, this relational scaffolding happens when learners share their questions and find answers together, moving from confusion to clarity. Third, in published articles on LCs, the dominant scaffold presented is the role sheet. Shelton-Strong (2012) reviewed the benefits of role sheets for the leader, summarizer, word master, passage person, connector, cultural collector, and artistic adventurer, but he pointed out that overdependence could lead to discussions becoming inauthentic (p. 216). Learning each of these roles includes learning-associated conversational exponents, which requires repeated LC practice and rotation of roles. Fourth, the elements of story in this study provide a topical routine, which simplifies the roles. The last of the five tools we used were response scaffolds. In this study, learners completed projects such as comic strip summaries and background knowledge PowerPoints, in addition to the five elements worksheet (Appendix A). They also wrote questions and

comments about the story to share. According to Hatch (1978), learning a conversational routine leads to developing syntactic prototypes through attempts to converse, which in turn leads to language acquisition. To assist this process we made a sheet with helpful gambits for in-the-moment reference (Appendix B). These techniques for scaffolding provided learners with necessary support for LC discussion.

The last area of essential research we adopted was Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) taxonomy of reading skills related to interpreting literature. Hillocks and Ludlow classified questions about fiction into two major levels: literal questions and inferential questions. They used Rasch modeling to show that the categories in their scale were both taxonomically related and hierarchical—from easiest to hardest (Table 1).

Table 1. Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) Taxonomy of Skills

Level	Skill category	Explanation
Literal	Basic stated information (BSI)	BSI questions refer to information that is central, stated explicitly many times and implied as well.
	Key detail (KD)	Key details happen at important points and have some causal relationship to what happens later. They may appear more than once, but not as frequently as BSI.
	Stated relationship (SR)	The reader must locate the relationship that is said to exist between at least two pieces of information: two characters, two events, or a character and an event. This is usually stated directly, but usually only once.

Level	Skill category	Explanation
Inferential	Simple implied relationship (SIR)	SIR questions differ from SR in that causes and relationships must be inferred.
	Complex implied relationship (CIR)	CIR questions require inferences based on many pieces of information. Their complexity arises from the fact that they involve large numbers of details that must be dealt with together. Questions about causes of character change, for example, involve relating details of personality before and after change.
	Author's generalization (AG)	Every fictional work reflects certain abstract generalizations about the human condition. AG questions contrast with those of CIR as they deal with ideas implied about the world outside the text.
	Structural generalization (SG)	SG questions require the reader to explain how parts of the work operate together to achieve certain effects. These questions first require the reader to generalize about the arrangement of the work, for example, asking about two or more uses of a scene in a story.

Background

The context for the current study included the pre-intermediate and advanced English levels of a large EFL program at a Japanese university. This research was situated in the reading and the vocabulary courses. Both courses included an extensive reading component (10 books per term) and introduced the five elements of story, applying these elements as a scaffold for LCs. In the pre-intermediate class, one week prior to the LC, each learner chose a book of interest and then made a group with other learners who had chosen the same book. After choosing these books, students had about 15 minutes of sustained silent

reading time to get into the story. Each student had to finish his or her book and prepare a mini-presentation on the story or its background as homework. The advanced English course introduced the five elements as a basic discussion framework. Due to the faster pace of the course, they had already discussed four short stories by the time the pre-intermediate class was ready for its first discussion.

Research Issues

Our goal was to explore the quality of verbal discussion exhibited by learners as measured by Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) hierarchy of comprehension skills, and more generally as patterns evident in transcripts from LC discussion. We investigated the following research questions:

1. What proportion of Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) taxonomy types are displayed by pre-intermediate and advanced learners?
2. What other differences, related to the five elements of story, are evident in the transcripts?

A third question was also posed to control for overall reading motivation. An adapted form of Guthrie, Coddington, and Wigfield's (2009) motivation profile survey was used to determine the overall reading motivation profiles of the classes invited to participate. Although description and discussion of this research question goes beyond the scope of this article, the pre-intermediate and advanced classes displayed almost identical motivational profiles, with 55% of learners being avid or ambivalent readers and 45% being apathetic or averse toward reading storybooks.

Method

Participants were self-selected from one pre-intermediate class of 48 learners and one advanced class of 23 learners. Fifteen pre-intermediate and four advanced learners agreed to allow the recording of their group's LC discussion. Advanced learners were taught the five elements and asked to discuss them, but were not assigned any specific roles. In order to ensure that pre-intermediate learners remained confident about their English, they were given more structured scaffolding, limited roles, and shorter, graded story texts to discuss. The four roles given were leader, commentator, discussion mapper, and tech person. The books these students selected were from 12 class sets of Penguin Level Two graded readers.

Participants

The participants in this research were 15 university learners of pre-intermediate English (TOEFL ITP avg. 443) and four advanced learners of English (TOEFL ITP avg. 508). These learners were Japanese native speakers, except for one Korean student, who was an advanced learner of Japanese in the pre-intermediate English course.

Procedure

In the pre-intermediate class, after completing background presentations for their books, participating students were briefed on how to map the discussion (Sevigny, 2012) that would take place the next day. These maps were used both in order to raise students' awareness of turn taking and to facilitate transcription. Lines between speakers represent direct invitations or changes of turn. A line to the center of the map represents an open invitation. Maps were used for meta-discussion related to turn taking as a closing group reflection. The mapper for the group

that read *Heidi* (Spyri, 2002) drew the example in Figure 1. The participants' names have been replaced with role labels.

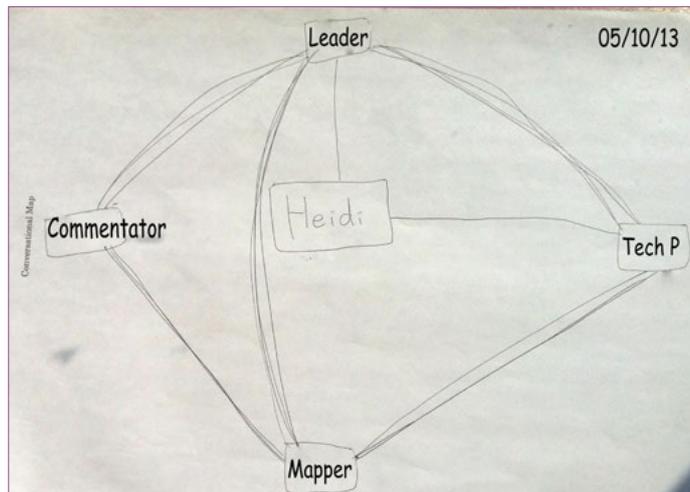


Figure 1. Conversation Map for *Heidi*.

In the advanced English course all members of the group were responsible for discussion of all five elements of story. For this reason, the advanced learners are identified as speakers A, B, C, and D in the transcripts. With no prior in-class preparation time, the group members met in an empty classroom where a researcher helped to record and map the discussion.

After the recordings were transcribed, dominant members of the groups helped to identify interlocutors and clarified the transcript. Completed transcripts were coded using Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) coding categories. The average frequency for the four groups of pre-intermediate learners was calculated for each of the seven categories.

Results

Correlation Between Class Level and Comprehension/Interpretative Skills

To address our first research question, we analyzed the transcripts of students' conversations by counting the questions and statements of each type. Table 2 shows the instances of each category.

Table 2. Comprehension Skill Taxonomy

Hillocks & Ludlow literary interpretation Skill type	Pre-intermediate $n = 15$	Advanced $n = 4$
	All titles (average)	"The Doll"
BSI: Basic stated info	5.25	6
KD: Key detail	17.5	44
SR: Stated relationship	1.25	7
SIR: Simple implied relationship	2.25	4
CIR: Complex implied relationship	2.5	4
AG: Authorial generalization	0.0	3
SG: Structural generalization	0.25	0

The most salient next steps for these pre-intermediate learners relate to key details (KDs) and stated relationships (SRs)—both literal interpretation skills. Although pre-intermediate learners struggled with these skills, the advanced learners demonstrated fluent discussion of both KDs and SRs. (See Excerpt 1.)

Excerpt 1

- B: He tried to steal the Prada clothes in the Prada shop, but
D: he was um

- C: arrested
 A: Kind of arrested. He was about to get arrested.
 D: Yeah.
 B: But he a: claims that his relative's father is Yonezawa, his
 C: father-in-law.

Furthermore, the advanced learners scaffolded each other fluently. On the other hand, the advanced learners did not make any structural generalizations (SGs) although the pre-intermediates did. One group of pre-intermediate learners, those reading *Lost in New York* (Escott, 2008) in Excerpt 2, demonstrated SG by discussing the main character's transformation from the beginning to the end of the book.

Excerpt 2

Commentator: What do you think about Nicky?

Leader: Nicky? About Nicky? Yeah. I read this the first time I think he is really kind of a weak, or yeah, he felt really nervous about the first he didn't know, but the story goes through, he will be the, he will, he became the kind of, he became the man.

Tech Person: Yeah, I think so. In one place, the picture of Nicky. He doesn't look so pleasant. But please look page 23. He is so happy. He is like a man.

All: Yeah.

Qualitative Differences in Transcripts

In addition to the differences analyzed above, the advanced group's discussion demonstrated shared leadership, mutual scaffolding, higher overall fluency, cooperative task completion,

and all five elements of story (Table 3). They also provided a detailed summary as a preamble to discussing more complex thematic elements.

Table 3. Story Elements Attempted

Story element	Pre-intermediate				Advanced
	<i>Black Beauty</i> (Sewell, 2008)	<i>Heidi</i> (Spyri, 2002)	<i>Lost in NY</i> (Escott, 2008)	<i>Prince & Pauper</i> (Twain, 2008)	<i>"The Doll"</i> (Dasgupta, 2005)
Plot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Character	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Setting			✓		✓
Theme				✓	✓
Conflict					✓

Pre-intermediate learners exhibited greater variability in fluency and more limited interpretive skills. They tended to avoid discussing conflict, themes, and settings and encountered more frequent need for conversational repair. However, they also produced insightful questions and comments.

Discussion

Comprehension Skill Taxonomy

As explained above, we used Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) categories to investigate the kind of scaffolding that would simultaneously support students' speaking and literary interpretation skills. It is revealing that the pre-intermediate learners referred to basic stated information (BSI) as often as the advanced learners, considering that advanced learners produced twice the instances of each skill on most other measures. In relative terms, the greater focus of pre-intermediate learners on BSI shows that

even with Penguin Level 2 readers, these learners need to articulate very literal, basic facts of the story, for example, in Excerpt 3, *Black Beauty's* sex. Although his sex is explicitly stated on the cover and in the first few pages, the fact that the story is written from Beauty's point of view obscures this basic information, so the question posed by the leader is seen as reasonable by the group. For this book and these learners, narrative point of view might be a better target for analysis. This finding highlights the importance of taking a flexible approach that allows learners to discuss what emerges for them.

Excerpt 3

Leader: Um, he or she? [referring to *Black Beauty's* sex] I think *Black Beauty* is . . .

Mapper: He.

The advanced learners started with a detailed summary of the story and produced 2.5 times as many KDs as the pre-intermediate learners. The pre-intermediate learners struggled to produce sequential summaries of the story, jumping to specific points of interest instead. For example, in the *Black Beauty* transcript the leader refers to a KD (see Excerpt 4). This difference suggests that teachers need to tailor guidance to the level of the students, particularly for summarizing, as even the leaders of the pre-intermediates had difficulty with this.

Excerpt 4

Leader: We going to cross the bridge, but bridge broke and *Black Beauty* realized that and John said, "Beauty, go on," but Beauty didn't move.

This same example also illustrates the pre-intermediate struggle to identify and keep track of SRs. Actually, the discussion leader mistakenly identified John as saying, "Beauty, go on." The advanced learners made 5.6 times more references to SRs; they did so accurately, and when a relationship was unclear, these learners quickly clarified the point.

In the *Lost in New York* group, the pre-intermediate learners struggled to remember that Lou was Nicky's aunt's coworker (Excerpt 5). In fact, acquaintance relationships appear commonly in graded readers, but pre-intermediate students have difficulty articulating these: They are not familiar with enough synonyms for terms like *coworker*, *peer*, and *colleague* and tend not to string possessives like *Nicky's aunt's coworker*.

Excerpt 5

Leader: So how about Lou? Who is he?

Mapper: I think he is Nicky's uncle? He is Nicky's

Commentator: uncle's friend.

Leader: He is uncle's friend. Where he working?

Mapper: Restaurant.

Despite difficulties at the literal level, the pre-intermediate groups made inferences competently. In Excerpt 6, the group discussing *Heidi* produced an excellent example of the simple implied relationship (SIR). The tech person even included the page reference from a passage in *Heidi* (Spyri, 2002): "Peter hated the girl from Frankfurt. Heidi was always with her and not with him! . . . Suddenly he was very angry. He pushed the wheelchair down the mountain!" (p. 34). This instance could arguably be classified as simply SR, as it appears just once in the text, and the words *hated* and *angry* explicitly state Peter's feeling. However, inferring a feeling of jealousy requires extra

vocabulary and greater powers of memory and concentration from the learners because the act of pushing the wheelchair is described 10 sentences after the original statement that included the word *hated*.

Excerpt 6

Tech: Why Peter, wheelchair, push the wheelchair down the mountain—page 34?

Pre-intermediate learners are capable of making deep insights into literature, usually through posing simple questions. Complex implied relationships (CIRs) were generated in the *Black Beauty* discussion with the question, “Was Black Beauty happy?” (See Excerpt 7.) This is a simple question to ask, but not to answer. Learners had to recall Beauty’s various hardships and fortunate encounters. This is a good example of readers needing to consider numerous KDs and relationships throughout the story.

Excerpt 7

Tech: Black Beauty has a lot of events, encounters, xxx accident.

Leader: He has a lot of accidents in that story.

Tech: I think Black Beauty was happy so a there was the hard time in various way. Do you think BB was happy, L?

Leader: Interesting because he had a lot of good owner and good, groom. And yeah, he made good friends of course. Sometimes he had bad accident, but yah, he is very positive and good horse.

As stated in the results section, the pre-intermediate learners of the *Lost in New York* group demonstrated SG, noticing how

the arrangement of the story impacts another story element. These learners discussed the main character’s transformation from the beginning to the end of the story, starting with the commentator’s question (see Excerpt 2). In this case, the water-color illustrations of the main character may also have helped learners reach this conclusion. However, the learners produced a lengthy thread on this topic, attempting to determine Nicky’s age, grade in school, and their own bravery level at his age. The expression, “please look page 23,” is remarkably similar to the phrase given on the conversation help sheet (Appendix B) and suggests that the teacher’s encouragement to give page references and the help sheet may have led to this interpretation. Encouraging engagement with the structure of text, in this case, has not demotivated students, as Van (2009) claimed, but has elicited advanced comprehension skills.

The pre-intermediate learners did not refer to background information about the text nor infer the purposes of the author (author generalization). The four titles these learners chose are graded reader versions of stories set outside Japan. The fact that many graded readers are set outside of Japan and not in a current time period complicates this analysis. For example, in 1877, Sewell wrote to raise awareness of animal welfare at a time when horses were the main vehicles of conveyance. This knowledge was available in the introduction to *Black Beauty* (Sewell, 2008), so in this case it is arguable that teachers could set pre-intermediate students to task analyzing the link between social context and story.

In contrast, in Excerpt 8, the advanced students discussing “The Doll” in *Tokyo Cancelled* (Dasgupta, 2005) surmised the author’s intent. The learners made inferences based on their knowledge of Japanese culture. In fact, two of the advanced learners lived in the neighborhood of Tokyo where the story was set. Choosing texts that draw from learners’ own regions and time period could prime learners’ practice of making such

inferences. Awareness of this issue presents an opportunity for publishers, writers, and teachers on several levels. First, publishers should recognize the need for niche market graded readers. Second, writers from specific regions could write stories set in more familiar contexts. Third, teachers could choose graded readers based upon the familiarity of the setting to the learners.

Excerpt 8

- A: Some of our classmates say this is the model of the Japanese man who are too busy to think about love, or
 B: I think the theme of this story is Japanese work too much . . .
 A: That's why this story was made

Weaknesses and Avenues for Future Research

This study draws upon data from the discussion of just four graded readers and one ungraded short story. The literature chosen for extensive reading and discussion generates many variables. Although these complexities are not lost on teachers, institutional policy makers regularly impose the use of ungraded texts from the top down. Thus, one useful avenue to consider in future research might be the effect of increasing text complexity on the quality of nonnative speakers' discussion. Employing the methodology used in this study longitudinally with a given group of learners as they experience ungraded texts could yield valuable data.

With regard to learner variables, it would be helpful to know each participant's motivation profile and how each motivation type correlates to discussion behavior. In this study, learners anonymously responded to a survey, which allowed for a general class profile, but not for individual profiles. Young (2010) used structured interviews to allow for individual motivation assessment. Young also demonstrated control of

other individual factors such as reading ability, extroversion, and conscientiousness.

Rating the literary comprehension skill levels exhibited in each transcript is very time-consuming. For future research, having multiple groups of learners discuss the same text could expedite coding.

A final factor to consider is the Hawthorne effect. The pre-intermediate learners recorded their own discussions. In contrast, one of the researchers was present and recorded the advanced learners' discussion. The presence of this researcher, who had not read the story, may have reified the need to summarize the story. The procedure needs to be consistent.

Recommendations for Scaffolding LCs at Different Levels

For lower level students, this study supports the use of conversation mapping to promote shared leadership. The relational scaffolding inherent in cooperative learning groups functioned for both the pre-intermediate and advanced learners. The contrast between pre-intermediate and advanced learners concerning role behavior suggests that role scaffolds can be dispensed with at higher levels.

The results of this study support the use of conversational routines for scaffolding LCs over a range of proficiency levels. The agenda for the five elements might include the following:

1. Self-introductions
2. Introduction of title and author
3. Description of setting
4. Team summary of plot
5. Comments/questions regarding characters
6. Comments/questions regarding themes/conflicts

7. Comments/questions about author's purpose

Instead of a leader introducing the members, members should introduce themselves. Similarly, rather than assigning one person the role of summarizer (Shelton-Strong, 2012), the results of this study support the use of a jigsaw approach to summarizing, with spontaneously shared turn taking being the ultimate goal. A similar approach might work for introducing characters and their relationships to each other. Language for describing relationships, however, needs to be primed in prediscussion activities at the pre-intermediate level. Separating these literal level activities into steps might ensure that learners' genuine, inferential level questions are allocated adequate time in the LC. For higher level learners, it might be possible to introduce Hillocks and Ludlow's (1984) literary interpretation skills more directly.

Response scaffolding can be categorized into four phases: reading, prediscussion, discussion, and postdiscussion. Specific tasks can be designed for each phase. During the reading phase, learners could write post-it notes, for example. These notes could be summary sentences, comments, or questions. More specifically, students could be directed, "Write post-it notes for each chapter that summarize the actions of the main characters in past tense." For the prediscussion phase, an activity sheet (Appendix A) could be used. During the discussion, the post-it notes could become bookmarks, helping learners develop skimming and scanning skills as they answer each other's questions in the midst of discussion. The postdiscussion phase could include written responses to the thoughts shared by classmates and metadiscussion of the process.

Conclusion

The results demonstrate that pre-intermediate learners can effectively ask a range of good discussion questions and make some surprisingly complex interpretations of level-appropriate

literature—even in the first book discussion of the semester. The findings contradict Van's (2009) claim that EFL teachers and learners do not possess adequate skills and knowledge to objectively discuss literary elements, at least for highly motivated learners. The ease with which advanced learners demonstrated competent, shared leadership in applying all five elements of story suggests that an EFL literature course with regular LCs could facilitate learners' confidence in internalizing multiple literary concepts and the skills to articulate them in English. Scaffolding for explaining literal level comprehension, like plot summary and describing character relationships, should be priority objectives for pre-intermediate learners. The discussions of setting, conflict, and theme need more scaffolding by teachers and require gradual introduction. These literary elements constitute a form of scaffolding not reflected in the standard publisher grading system (head-words). How to optimize scaffolding for discussion of these (and other) story elements merits further investigation, perhaps in longitudinal studies with regularly recorded LCs at various proficiency levels. Due to the great number of variables involved with LCs, researchers need to carefully control conditions in order to design scaffolding that meets learners' desire for both efficient and enjoyable language learning and institutional demands for solid academic skills. Using multiple methods that include motivational profiles can help to achieve these goals. Finally, creating a shared, topical routine, rather than narrowly defined roles, can encourage shared leadership, inclusion, and highly motivating literary analysis, even at the pre-intermediate level.

Bio Data

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Appendix A

Five Elements of Story Portfolio Activity

Reading Response Activity #2: The Five Elements of Story

Fiction

Title: _____

Plot—The series of events in the story is called the plot. The actions of the story usually start slow and get more and more exciting. The climax of the story is the most exciting part.

What were the main events in the story?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Characters—These are the people, animals, or even cars, or toys . . . They are the actors in the story. Describe one character of the story below:

1. Character name: _____
2. Gender? Male or Female
3. What does he/she/it look like? _____
4. What is his/her/its personality? _____
5. How old is the character? _____
6. What does this character want? _____

Conflict—The conflict follows a few general patterns:

Character versus character—when two characters of the story are against each other.

Character versus nature—when the main character is fighting something from nature.

Character versus self—when the main character is fighting something inside him or herself.

1. Describe the conflict in your story:

_____ vs. _____

2. Can you explain the conflict in more detail?

Theme—This is the topic of the story. There may be more than one. The theme of the story is often a big word (an abstract idea). In the film *Titanic*, for example, the story is about romantic love. It is also about love between rich and poor characters. It is also about survival.

1. What is one of the main themes in your story? _____
2. Explain how this is a theme in your story:

Setting—This is where and when your story takes place. *Titanic* takes place on a ship in the Atlantic Ocean in 1912.

1. Where does your story take place? _____
2. When does your story take place? _____

Appendix B

Roles, Instructions, and Help for Recorded Discussion

Roles	Role instruction	Prediscussion instructions	Conversation help sheet (During discussion)
1. Leader	Keep the topic going and be ready to change the topic when necessary. Help everyone participate.	1. Please use your notes and your book.	___, what do you think about ___?
2. Commentator	Ask interesting questions related to text. Give your opinions.	2. Start the digital recorder (Tech Person)	Adding to what ___ said, . . .
3. Tech Person	Make sure the mike is turned on, is working, and is turned off at the end.	3. Introduce the group members and book title (Leader)	I agree with ___, and . . .
4. Mapper	Diagram on paper, who takes each turn, and when questions are asked, whether they are to the table, or to a specific person.	4. Introduce the first topic of five elements of story (Leader)	I understand what ___ is saying, but . . .
5. All	a. Choose which of the five elements of story are most interesting and important to talk about. b. Note two interesting pages and two questions to share in the discussion.	5. Ask for who has questions or comments, and say the name of the next speaker (Leader) Example: What do you all think about this book? T., please share.	I disagree. . .
		6. Next person shares (Group Member) Example: "I think . . . E., what do you think?"	Excuse me, ___, where in the book is it that makes you think that?
		7. When the discussion stops, ask for new questions, suggest new topic, or thank everyone for discussing the book today (Leader)	I have a question about something on page ___.
			Look at page ___ and paragraph ___. On the [2nd/3rd/4th] line of the paragraph it says . . .