Academic Language in Book Clubs

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Abstract
Book clubs are increasingly used by teachers to help raise ELL literacy levels. Yet, there has been little research on whether this tool actually contributes to improved oral language proficiency. The research question is, after being taught the academic language needed to ask and answer higher order questions, how well are students able to ask and answer questions? This study examines to what extent students are able to engage in higher-order questioning after receiving direct instructional support through book clubs. The methods employ anecdotal notes, transcripts of student conversations, and student written work to assess how students can discuss text before and after being taught scaffolds. Using Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain to measure results, the author concludes that: 1) engagement in authentic discourse through book clubs can increase long-term language learning; and 2) book clubs are an effective forum to teach higher order questioning.

Keywords
ESL/ELLs, Literacy, Reading, Questioning Strategies

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location. Most book clubs meet monthly in order to give members time to read the next book. Clubs started among friends often meet in people's homes. But if the purpose of your club is to meet new people, it's best to meet in public locations like library community rooms or coffee shops. Bookstores are often happy to host book clubs as well. Remember, if you meet in business (like a coffee shop), it's polite to purchase something if you plan on staying for an extended period of time.