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Social Development of English Second Language Learners: The Use of Literature Study Circles

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Abstract

Based on the needs of many immigrant children and their teachers to better understand the unique relationship between linguistic barriers and social achievements, the purpose of this research was to find out how implementation of literature study circles into the curriculum might help English Second Language (ESL) learners connect with a classroom community and develop socially. The idea was for two Russian ESL students to be actively involved in developing their social identity in the American mainstream classroom through the implementation of literature study circles where all activities were oriented toward collaborative learning, communal support, and cultural appreciation. Data indicated that the implementation of literature study circles into curriculum provided a culturally appropriate learning environment that raised the levels of academic achievement of the two ESL students, promoted their cultural adaptation, fostered second-language acquisition, and developed and rehearsed their social skills.

Background

I feel different from everyone else. . . . I can't really be with anybody because people can't understand me, and I can't understand them. I feel it is hard for me to tell them all what I feel or express myself. So, I just keep my feelings inside.
(Immigrant child from Ukraine, age 12, personal communication)

To be a teacher is to be a researcher. Teachers' explorations vary in ideas, strategies, methods, and individual needs. My personal experiences as a teacher of immigrant children and an immigrant myself make me aware of the social isolation and academic failure among the immigrant population in the United States. My goal is not to find a magic formula that will solve a wide range of multicultural issues in this country, even though I wish that some day this kind of magic could happen in our society. However, I hope to extend and solidify my own understanding of the problem and engage my colleagues in the process of observation, reflection, and inquiry. Most importantly, I truly believe that my personal knowledge about the complexity of social issues can help the immigrant children with whom I am working to establish themselves as people who are accepted and belong, not who are rejected or socially

abandoned.

English as a Second Language (ESL) students are sometimes considered difficult or problems simply because they are misunderstood. They appear aggressive, belligerent, or intellectually and socially shut down in the eyes of their classmates and even their teachers. The reality often is that the limited repertoire of learning practices acceptable in the classroom prevents ESL students from displaying (and their teachers from observing) competencies that are routinely presented in informal peer activities and community settings. I see many school conflicts arising as consequences of cultural misinterpretation and prejudice. I hear racial insults and name-calling that disturb the playground and classroom. I witness cultural and language differences making children feel socially isolated and personally harmed.

Primary Research Participants

When I looked at the playground through my classroom window, I often saw a little Russian boy, whom I will call Roman to protect confidentiality, standing aside from the other children. As I observed him during lunch breaks and classroom activities, he usually sat alone and did not interact with others. Because of Roman's behavior and his very limited knowledge of English, he was allowed to come to my first grade classroom as a part-time student. His mornings were spent in kindergarten under the supervision of a different teacher. She often complained that Roman was a "trouble-maker," a "handful," and "not easy to work with." "Roman hit the other child with his backpack." "Roman would not share crayons with other children." "Roman did not ask permission for free time on the computer." I received these kinds of comments from her and other school staff all the time.

There was another newcomer in our school, whom I will call Dima. His family came from Ukraine about the same time as Roman's, five or six months previously. Although Dima looked very small and his English skills were low, based on his age, the boy was placed in a sixth-grade classroom. In contrast to Roman, Dima did not have a reputation as a "problem student" among his teachers and classmates. However, I saw the trauma of having been uprooted in his noticeable inability to communicate and in his continuous choice to retreat from other students. He withdrew even further when English-speaking children said to him, "Hey, Russian, speak! Say something!"

Because both boys seemed alone and socially lost, I wanted to find a way to encourage them to come forward and relate to other children. I hoped to convey to them that they were individuals learning a new language along with a new culture, people in the process of reestablishing their social profiles, not people with problems.

Research Question

Based on the needs of these and many other immigrant children and my personal and professional intention to better understand the unique relationship between linguistic barriers and social achievements, I outlined a key question for my research: *How can implementation of literature study circles into the school curriculum help Roman and Dima connect with classroom community and develop socially?*

Literature Review

In order to look beyond my own classroom and find out what other researchers are thinking and doing in this area, I looked

through ten different literature sources. Without a doubt, the information from these sources related to my own experiences and views, but most importantly, they provided practical orientations and strategies for the entire project.

I began to explore alternatives to traditional literacy methods and to study the use of literature study circles (LSCs) for engaging and involving ESL students in our classroom community. I discovered that Gail Whang, in *Literature Study Circles in a Multicultural Classroom* (1998), grounded her work on the belief that reading, especially reading in multicultural literature circles, is a *transactional process* between the reader and the text, the individual and the culture:

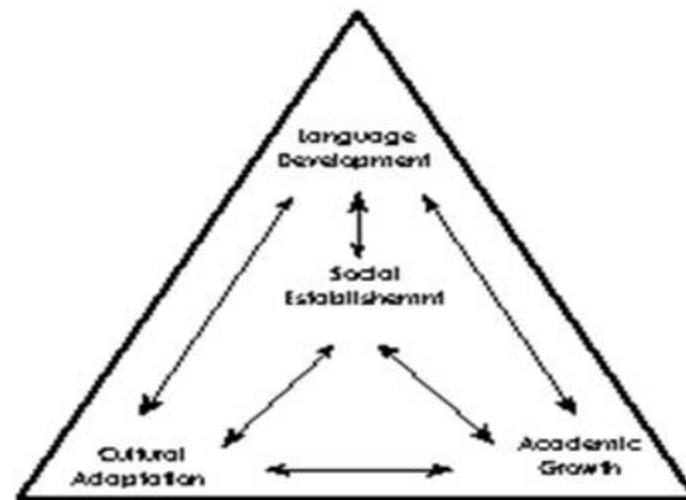
When children read about other lives, they make sense of their own. It is not just reading for pleasure and information – it is a way out of personal judgments and narrow-mindedness into norms and principles of others. (p. 42)

Thus, literature is a connection to humanity, and, perhaps most importantly, an inspiration for children's maturing character. I considered Whang's implementation of literature study circles as a practical educational method that could motivate non-native English speakers and connect them with a new culture in a learner-centered and imaginative environment.

According to Lev Vygotsky, in *Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (1978), learning is a socially constructed phenomenon (p.34). From his perspective, frequent cases of ESL academic failure may be seen as a failure of the educational system to provide linguistic-minority students with the appropriate social interactions necessary for their literacy development. For the reason that human learning is a profoundly interactive phenomenon, internal cognitive development is triggered "when the child is interacting with other people in a secure environment and in cooperation with his or her peers" (p. 90). The Vygotskian framework focuses on the interpersonal elements of learning and provides an obvious link between individual cognitive processes and the social standings of ESL learners. Moreover, it accepts the connection between language development and social status of language-minority students, which I attended to explore in my study.

In addition to the link between language growth and social development of ESL learners, language growth cannot be isolated from other issues. The proficiency in English alone cannot solve socio-cultural and academic problems among language minority students. Virginia Collier's (1994) conceptual model of social establishment (see Figure 1) has four major components: social, linguistic, academic, and cultural. While this model looks simple on paper, it is a multifaceted prism with many dimensions. At the heart of the model is an immigrant student going through the process of social adjustment in a new society. Central to that student's social adjustment are the surrounding processes: language development, academic growth, and cultural adaptation that accrue through everyday school experiences in classes, recesses, lunches, meetings, after school activities, and other activities.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of social establishment (Collier, 1994)



Based on my professional values, school observations, and literature sources, I used Collier's model to outline my research. I investigated whether regular practice of literature study circles would influence language, academic, and cultural development of the two ESL learners in my classroom. I wanted to understand whether they would improve their social establishment.

The Inner World of the Immigrant Child by Cristina Igoa (1995) is intended for all in-service teachers concerned with the educational and societal abilities of immigrant children in American's schools. The author shares her teaching methodology with other educators, based on her view of why and how literacy is central to personal learning and to one's sense of self-empowerment. She calls this philosophy the *threefold cultural / academic / psychological (CAP) intervention* (p.21). The goals of the CAP intervention are to facilitate the child's maintenance of "authenticity and connection to his or her native culture, social achievement, and sense of feeling fully alive in a new culture" (p. 8). I think this approach builds a supportive and cooperative environment for both students and teachers regardless of their cultural backgrounds and customs. Three ideas were especially valuable for my ESL students and me:

- The importance of the feeling of having cultural roots
- The importance of understanding culture
- The importance of social belonging

A crucial message is that modern teachers need to change so that they can become more than ordinary distributors of information. They must humanize and stimulate their classroom environment in order to facilitate the development of social companionship among all students. Igoa (1995) encouraged me to ask myself if this approach might benefit all children in my classroom. Igoa's answer is yes, all children, mainstream and non-native English speakers can benefit from this approach, which makes it even more powerful and influential.

The combination of a humanized inclusive classroom environment with an "alternative model" for literacy is examined by Stephen Reder (1994) in his article, "Practice-Engagement Theory: A Sociocultural Approach to Literacy Across Languages and

Cultures." Within this framework, literacy is conceived as a set of social or cultural practices and its participants as a community of practice. As a set of socially patterned activities, literacy develops and spreads through a process of socialization, the means of which may include cooperative learning, mutual mental processing, and social founding. In some schools, minority children's biggest educational and social problem may not be that they are behind in acquiring the knowledge but that they are acquiring negative social meanings for being dissimilar. These ideas were foundational for my research.

In a society dependent on print, anyone who cannot read and write is at a tremendous disadvantage in the job market, in school, and in different types of social interactions. For an illiterate member of a highly literate culture, personal growth and self-fulfillment may be severely restricted. As Joanne Devine (1990) observes in her article, "Literacy and Social Power," "reading, writing, and language interrelate with the workings of power and desire in social life" (p. 23). The author raises a question about the problems, successes, and failures of literacy acquisition for members of linguistic and cultural minorities, a question closely related to the subject of my research. The author makes an important distinction between *literacy skills* for processing written material and *literacy power*, the behavior of engaging in interactions with text. Literacy power is possible among ESL students through appropriate education, personal mind-set, and social attitude.

Our schools and classrooms should reflect the ideas of equality and democracy that our culture holds dear. Democratic principles are based upon concepts of tolerance and understanding. What is a better way to develop those concepts than to explore multicultural literature? Without a doubt, the integration of multicultural literature into different subjects at school will help children to realize that human similarities must outweigh human differences. *Multicultural Literature: A Story of Your Own* by Joyce Hansen (1996) addresses the use of multicultural literature for the benefit of mainstream students and immigrant students in our classrooms:

Learning about the customs, beliefs, and traditions of others helps students become more open to differences. This openness, when nurtured and developed, fosters social tolerance. (p. 43)

Although learning to read and write in another language is an individual accomplishment, it takes place within social and political contexts. According to Vogel Zanger (1994), the act of acquiring literacy has social consequences that go beyond the individual. The interrelationships among individuals, the social context, and acquisition of social knowledge establish the conditions for language development to occur. In his article, "Not Joined In: The Social Context of English Literacy Development for Hispanic Youth," Zanger suggests that social change occurs in varying stages:

- Positive changes in self-perception
- Alteration of relations with members of the household and community
- Information gathering related to broader community involvement
- Change-oriented community actions

Early studies of bilingual children by Sivian and White (1987) and other American researchers focused mainly on how bilingualism facilitated or interfered with second language development and often concluded that bilingualism was a disadvantage to children's social interactions and learning abilities. However, more recent research (e.g., Reder & Green, 1995) has attempted to correct this flaw by testing bilingual proficiency in both languages. In *Language for All Our Children*, Terry Pipper (1998) helped me reform my opinion about the mental powers and social images of bilingual children. For example, the author suggested learning as much as possible about the traditional and contemporary life styles of different cultures. She also recommended understanding

different patterns of human development within different cultures as well as their value systems and assumptions about society and education. Many patterns of second language learning and behavior such as linguistic borrowing, grammatical error, social isolation, fear, and misconduct are common and sequential. The most important idea, from my perspective, was for teachers to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. It would be a mistake not to give immigrant children an opportunity to learn in a friendly and facilitative environment. Modern teachers should be tolerant and sympathetic as they work with children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to foster their intellectual self-esteem and sense of social worth.

Moving away from a classroom where teachers expect only the so-called right answers, J. Brown (1998), author of *Curricular Conversations*, supports teachers' and students' explorations of a variety of social issues and uncertainties. Believing that teachers are theoreticians and researchers-in-action as they go about developing, implementing, and evaluating their teaching methods, I agree with the author that providing opportunities for risk-taking at school is important for all categories of students, but it becomes even more significant in a classroom with second language learners.

According to Elizabeth Coelho's (1998) linguistic analysis, although many ESL students achieve communicative competence in oral language within two or three years, it may take five years or more to perform as well as native speakers in the academic aspects of language proficiency. In addition, it takes them even longer to become self-confident and secure in a new culture, to adopt its values and way of living.

Learning a second language is a challenging process in which students construct and experiment with their own hypotheses of how a language functions. They explore different strategies and develop sense of self-assurance. Therefore, learning environments where mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process support second language learners' establishment of social status among their peers. Freed from constantly monitoring rules of pronunciation and grammar, ESL learners are more likely to attempt new communication and academic strategies. I began my study with the belief that, if I promoted risk-taking and view mistakes as positive step-marks of academic and character efforts, the educational and social effects on my students would be constructive and that I would be able to help my ESL students move from a lower level of self-confidence to a higher level of social success.

Research Design

I realize that research is an ongoing and continuous process which evolves as a teacher-researcher learns more and expands his or her knowledge about the topic. Changes in time, educational guidelines, classroom environments, teacher's professionalism, and other related issues might transform, change, and add to what is happening in the progression of study. Therefore, I kept my mind open and worked toward these kinds of changes by trying different strategies, expanding reading materials, and discussing inspiring ideas with my colleagues. In addition, I built an investigational framework for my central methodological strategies that helped me pursue my investigation and interpret the collected data:

1. What do I see, hear, and experience?
2. What do I need to know that I cannot always see, hear, or experience?
3. What does it mean?

Instructional Strategy

In order to create a sociable, open, and productive environment for ESL students to exercise their language and social skills, I practiced the integration of multicultural literature and literature circles in my classroom. In heterogeneous literature circle groups where a range of proficiency in English was represented, ESL learners interacted with more fluent peers. There were increased opportunities for them to question and negotiate meaning of reading materials, give their own feedback to others, as well as practice writing, listening, and speaking. The native speakers were asked to modify their language to provide comprehensible input while Roman and Dima attempted to model their language on that of their peers. The main learning activities for the literary circles were blending the reading and discussion of multicultural literature, playing linguistic games, practicing writing, and doing small art projects and oral reports.

From personal experience, I knew these educational techniques might serve as vehicles for Roman and Dima to express themselves to the new classroom community. For example, I applied the method of doing a report about a native country for two reasons: For academic reasons, Roman and Dima were learning how to research, read, and summarize. For social reasons, they were experiencing a sense of connection through the re-telling of their histories, dialoging, and sharing traditional artifacts.

These educational approaches, on one hand, asked mainstream students to observe and appreciate other cultures and, on the other hand, awarded each ESL student a position of intercultural guide. Using these activities as strategic tools, I was able to give Roman and Dima a real chance to connect their native cultural ethics with the values and morals of their new classroom community.

Data Collection

Collecting *observation* field notes in the classroom over a period of two months helped me accumulate data. The field notes were selective, focused on the topic of my research, and helped me explore the direction of my study. I organized the data using manila folders categorized by students' names, dates, and specific topics, such as language development, academic growth, cultural adaptation, social establishment, and intermingling. To keep my data accurate, I wrote about an event or a time period as soon as possible before I forgot or discussed it with somebody else.

I also collected focused observation data on the two students who were my primary subjects. This required a block of time to systematically observe and record events in a participants' day. This method of data gathering gave me an opportunity to go beyond the classroom walls to see what could be learned outside. For example, I was able to witness how Roman and Dima related and socialized with their peers during recesses, lunch breaks, PE, music, and library times.

Periodic dialogues in which I questioned the two students about events and experiences that occurred during focused observations followed. Using observation data to focus *interviews* helped me experience more fully the social life of the school from the perspective of the immigrant students and, in so doing, raised relevant issues and questions for further study.

Collaborative conversations throughout the time of my research were a means to communicate with and learn from different teachers and school staff members as well; they filled in gaps I was not able address through classroom-based observations or individually focused observations. During these conversations, a general three-point rubric was used as rating of the boys' academic performances (see Appendix A).

I also interviewed the students' parents two times with the intention to discover more about the boys' adaptations to the new

American culture and their personal growth (see Appendix B).

My research was focused on Roman's and Dima's language development in connection with their social achievements. I could not ignore the power of looking closely at what students produced. I collected samples of their school papers, homework, and art projects in order to learn how the students processed information and dealt with complex topics and issues. With this *documents review*, I learned more about the boy's personalities and their own ways of dealing with learning dilemmas.

Interpreting and Analyzing Data

There are many approaches for interpreting and analyzing data. I personally found that ongoing reflection did not let the information mount up over time and was the most satisfying and worthwhile. Therefore, I was looking at the data as I went along with my study, long before my investigation was finished.

Open coding, according to many teacher-researchers, refers to a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, and categorizing data. It was the first step in organizing the data in my research. In order to comprehend the data I collected, I determined the categories that seemed to emerge and link to the topic of my study: cultural adaptation, academic growth, language development, and social establishment. By analyzing according to these categories, I found patterns and links. I began to specify both patterns and categories in the dataset by using colored dots and highlighting. Thinking in terms of categories and patterns helped me sort through data and find the pieces that developed the core of my findings.

Findings

During the past two decades, rapidly increasing language minority demographics have had a major impact on our schools. Yet, even with all the varied instructional approaches for providing a meaningful education and social adaptation for language minority students, we are still struggling to identify the most effective learning practices. Based on the literature and my own observations, I believe the regular practice of literature study circles in multicultural settings can be one of these successful educational practices. To understand the reasons why this method works, I used Collier's conceptual model (see Figure 1) as a conceptual framework, applying it for analyzing my findings and for organizing presentation in terms of (1) language development, (2) cultural adaptation, (3) academic growth, and (4) social establishment.

(1) Language Development

In her book, *Literacy in Multicultural Settings*, Kathryn Au (1995) defines language development as the ability and the willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text in ways which meet the requirements of a particular social context. This definition addresses one's willingness as well as one's ability to use language. These features are important because, as I found in my research, students of diverse backgrounds may have the ability to use literacy skills such as verbal communicating, reading, or writing, but may be unwilling to do so, as illustrated in the two following examples.

Example 1. On March 10, 2003, Dima's teacher asked him to write a short story about his family while the other children in his class worked on their science reports. The teacher felt that, since Dima had limited English skills and could not manage science, he had to be "occupied with some kind of language learning experience." In this exercise, Dima showed little ability to compose the

assignment. He wrote in Russian with only a few English words – family, dog, and Ukraine. His composition was effortless and mostly described the names of his family members. I felt the boy sensed no meaning in the task and did not appreciate his separation from the other students. Therefore, a few days later, I arranged the same activity in our literature study circle with an extension of sharing family stories in a writer's chair. Dima asked me questions about the writer's chair, looked up words in a Russian-English dictionary, and checked his spelling many times. Now, with a friendly audience and real meaning for his writing, Dima showed greater effort and better writing:

This my story. My father Nikoly comes to the United States first. He found work. My mother Lyda, my sister Oxana, and I come to the United States too. I was sad when I leave Ukraine. I live my friends and my dog. His name was Scary. We live in Kelso now. I have no dog. My mother does not work now. She is home. I like it here kind of. (Dima, March 13, 2003)

In spite of some language errors in his writing and the natural shyness of his character, Dima put real feeling into his work and presented it in the writer's chair.

Example 2. On March 20, 2003, Roman's kindergarten teacher complained about the boy's poor performances in spelling his first and last name. "He does not understand the difference between those two and always changes them around," she explained to me. "Can you help him?" After I talked to Roman about this matter, I found out that he simply did not like how his name sounded in English and was even embarrassed to use it in class. For that reason, I started to introduce my Russian first and last name to the students every time we got together in our literacy circles. In addition, I asked the other children to do the same. We even made little nametags and proudly wore them during our meetings. In only a week, Roman's mind-set changed dramatically. He started to appreciate his name, willingly used it, and spelled it correctly every time the teacher asked him to do so. "Roman likes wearing his nametag in class too," acknowledged his teacher on March 30, 2003. "He shows it to the other children and their parents and even reads it to them."

Au's (1994) definition of language development mentions both reading and writing. The ability to read and write well in standard American English is certainly a goal for ESL learners, including Dima and Roman. However, contrary to the popular idea that it takes a motivated student a short time to acquire a second language, recent studies have found that 5-12 years of second language development are needed for most advantaged students in order to reach a deep academic proficiency in English. Since I did not have all the time and resources needed, my primary goal was to give Roman and Dima a successful start for reading and writing development through a variety of approaches implemented in literature study circles. For example, after students read biographies of people from different cultures, Dima was inspired to write and share with our literature group a short biography of his own:

I was born in Ukraine in a beautiful home. I lived there for eleven years. I went to school in Ukraine up to fifth grade. One day my mother came and said, "We are going to America." I felt sad and nervous. I felt sad to leave my friends behind and nervous to go to a new place. So we came. I start liking it here. (Roman, translated from Russian, April 23, 2003)

On May 1, 2003, after I read a real story about World War II to the circle group, Dima asked me if he could borrow the book and read it at home to his sister and parents. Five days later, he told me that his grandfather was a soldier during World War II and even received a medal of honor from the Russian government. I asked the boy if he would like to write his feeling about World War II in Russian and translate them into English for his circle group buddies. Dima agreed immediately and passionately described his feelings and emotions about this reading experience on paper:

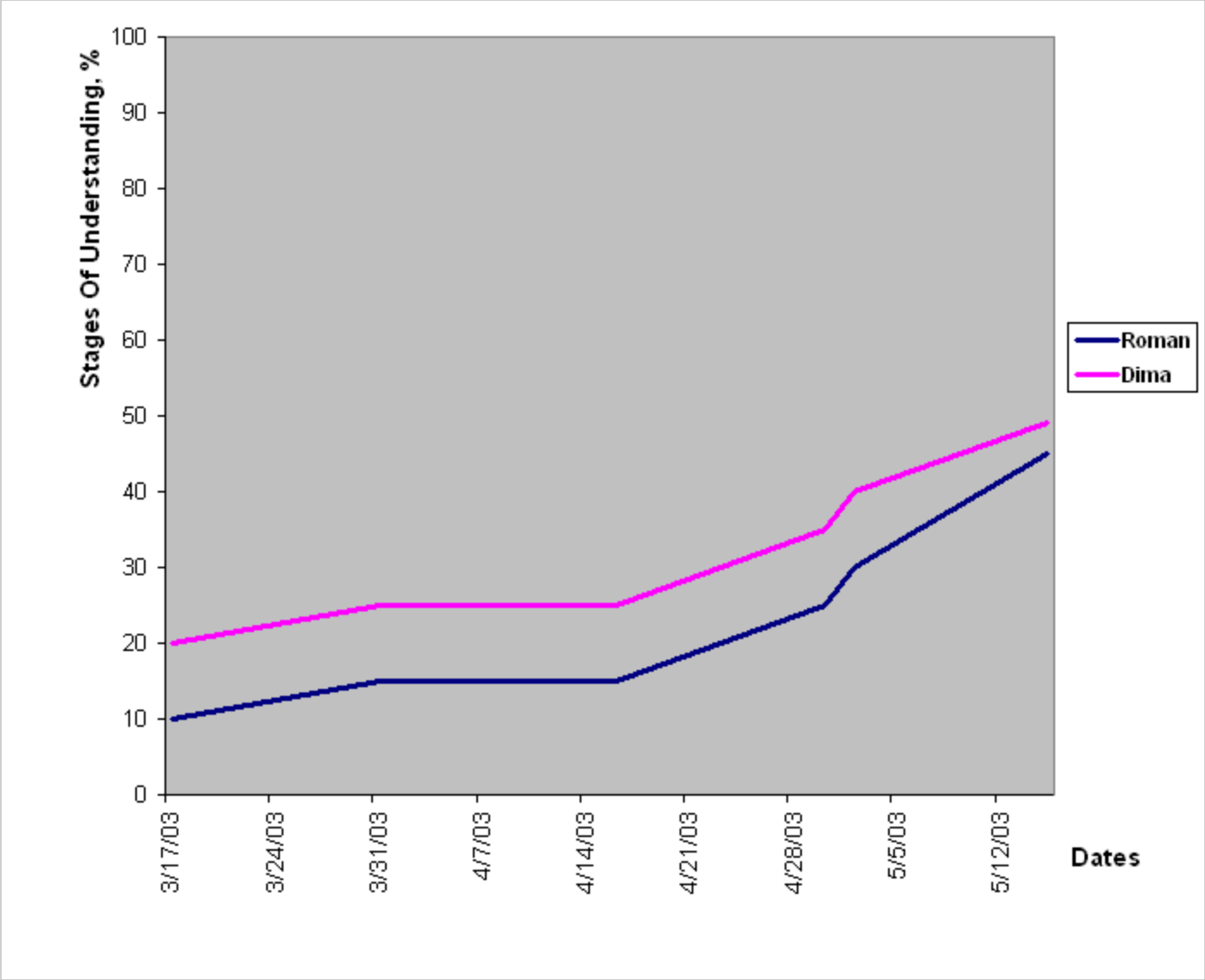
My grandfather was a soldier during World War II. He told me horrifying stories about what happened during that time. Many people died of starvation, cold, and painful wounds. Many others were placed in concentration camps. I think that people around the world should stop fighting with each other. Every person deserves a happy and joyful life. (Dima, translated from Russian, May 10, 2003)

On May 15, 2003, right before a Memorial Day ceremony at our school, Dima shared his writing with our literature circle group. He did a good job of translating it to the other students. Moreover, he led our group in the discussion about the difference between fiction and nonfiction literature and the value of people's real-life experiences.

Since Roman is only six years old and his literacy skills in both languages are still very limited, I could not really evaluate his progress in reading and writing. However, I estimated the boy's overall English development by marking down every new word or phrase he used verbally during our circle meetings. I calculated at least nineteen new English words during the two-month period: text, author, idea, point, summary, retell, paragraph, period, timeline, help, translate, feelings, page, follow, turn, group, important, buddy, and information. In addition to these new vocabulary words, Roman started to use six new English phrases: follow along, take your turn, my feelings about this book are, this paragraph is about, the author's idea is, and I like (do not like) this book because.

What's more, in our literature study circles, different learning skills were used to construct a meaning of English texts, phrases, or particular words. During these types of exercises, I allowed Dima and Roman to use the strength of their home language in order to develop cognitive and thinking skills in English. For example, during our weekly activities, Roman and Dima read *The Hat* by Jan Brett (1998), but discussed their ideas and shared their feelings about this book in their native language. "I read similar story in Russia," announced Dima. "Only instead of a pig there was a horse, and instead of a girl there was a boy in that Russian book. Do you want me to say who the other characters were?" I asked Dima and Roman to make pictures of all the characters from the Russian text and write down their names. Later, during group discussions, the other students from our literature circle modeled the use of English for Roman and Dima to say the same animal names in English: boy, chicken, hedgehog, duck, pig, dog, horse, and cat. On one hand, this educational approach encouraged the boys to construct and communicate their own thinking. On the other hand, it taught them how to express the same thoughts by using English terms and structures. The boys' understanding of English texts was visibly increasing, as evidenced by their growing level of comprehension of main ideas and time sequences (see Figure 2). In addition, Roman and Dima were able to express themselves more clearly, competently, and efficiently in both languages.

Figure 2. Understanding of English texts



0%	Unsatisfactory understanding of text
25%	Marginal understanding of text
50%	Satisfactory understanding of text
75%	Substantial understanding of text
100%	Full understanding of text

Although not mentioned in Au's (1994) definition, speaking and listening – the other language skills – also have a crucial role in ESL development and, therefore, were essential parts of our literature study practices. Roman and Dima had weekly opportunities to

listen to someone else read aloud, talk to different people, as well as freely express their own way of thinking.

For example, one student from our literature circle was reading his favorite part from the book *Titanic* by Mark Dubowski (1998) while the other students quietly listened. Then, they were asked to give personal inputs about the story. In this exercise, both Dima and Roman showed curiosity about the topic of the book. Roman made a huge picture of the ship and said, “My ship is very strong and has enough lifeboats for everybody.” Dima revealed his feelings by saying, “I feel fascinated and sad about what happened to this ship. I hope it will never happen again, ever.”

Our circle group had a special journal where I wrote down the students’ individual listening skills every time we met. Every child received five points each day if he or she demonstrated good participation and paid attention. When the students reached a fifty-point level, they were allowed to bring a special book of their choice from home or the library and read (or retell) their favorite parts to others. Based on the evaluation of my journal notes, both Roman and Dima showed a high level of interest, listening skills, and a steady participation (see Tables 1 and 2). Both boys reached the fifty-point level twice and were able to share their favorite Russian books with our literature circle. Since their Russian books had a lot of colorful images, I was able to interpret their contents to the other students in our circle so everyone was able to appreciate and enjoy them.

Table 1. Mean Scores on the Personal Listening Skills assessment, April 2003

	Dates: 1	3	14	16	21	23	28	30
Students:								
Ashley	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
Bradley	25	29	34	-	40	42	47	-
Colby	12	17	20	25	30	34	39	44
Dima	-	45	50	5	10	15	20	25
Hannah	50	5	10	14	19	21	26	31
Roman	45	50	5	10	15	20	24	29

Table 2. Mean Scores on the Personal Listening Skills assessment, May 2003

	Dates: 2	6	8	13	15	20	22	27
Students:								
Ashley	5	10	19	23	28	-	-	-
Bradley	50	5	10	15	25	-	-	-
Colby	10	19	24	29	32	-	-	-
Dima	30	35	40	45	50	-	-	-
Hannah	36	42	47	50	-	-	-	-
Roman	34	39	44	49	50	-	-	-

(2) Cultural Adaptation

Immigrant children with whom I had worked previously and who have achieved second language literacy almost always identified the significance of peers in helping them adapt to the new culture. Therefore, in our literature study circles, I drew attention to peer bonding as a bridge helping Roman and Dima cross over into a new way of life. I saw that friends could act as counselors and leaders, help stimulate oral language, and build individual self-esteem.

For example, after reading the book *I Love You Mom* by Iris Hisky (1998) that describes the many different jobs mothers can have in a child's life, Dima wrote the following comment:

I'd like to tell you that today I was happy because I realized that American children love their parents as much as Russian children. I enjoyed being in a study group. I like everybody in this group. And this way I learn more about this country. (Dima, translated from Russian, May 7, 2003)

On the other hand, I realized that making friends for Roman and Dima was not always easy. They preferred to stay in class during recesses and speak only to me, avoiding the other teachers and students. Dima recalled his fear of ridicule by others as part of the reason for his isolation:

I am afraid to say anything. I am afraid people would make fun and laugh at me because of my unusual name and accent. I feel safe when I keep quiet. (Dima, translated from Russian, March 30, 2003)

In fact, it was unlikely that other students would single out Dima as an oddity and more likely that because, with cultures so dissimilar, it was hard for children to find common ground.

When children play and work together, then the processes of cultural adjustment and language development may not be such painful experiences. Therefore, during our literature circles, I put into practice different types of cultural learning games. *State Puzzle*, *Word Show*, *Word Mystery*, *Did You Know About*, *We Have a Visitor*, and *Today's News* – all of these activities stimulated Roman's and Dima's thinking and verbal communication, created a meaningful context for language use, and obviously assisted their social needs.

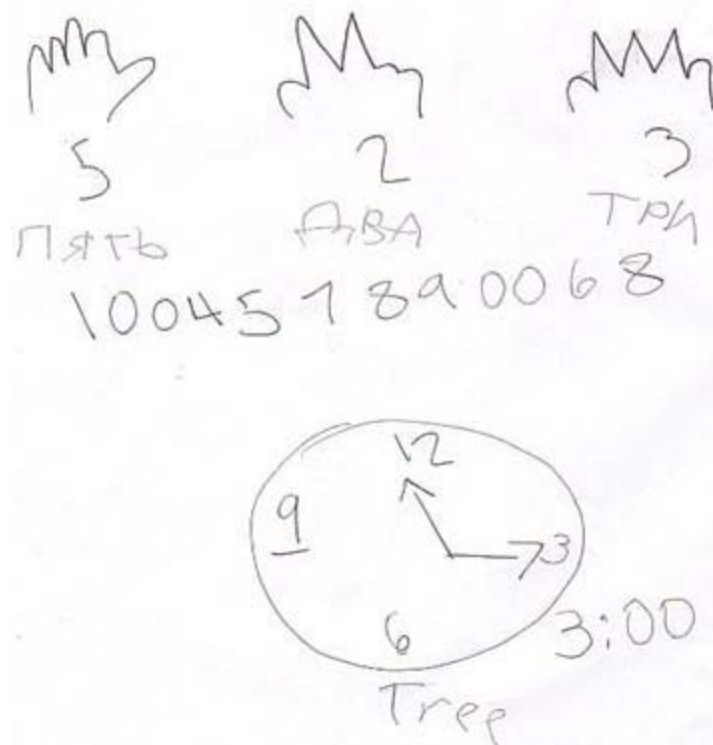
For example, Roman's favorite game was *We Have a Visitor* where I brought different kinds of toys (visitors) to our circle group and let the children play with them. During this game, the children were asked to describe the toys by using as many adjectives and describing phrases as possible. They also liked the idea of finding different names for the toys and making little stories about them. I especially liked Roman's story about an orange frog:

This frog is orange. I do not like the orange color, but I like this frog. It likes to sit on my lap, because I am wearing a green shirt. I will try to catch a fly for this frog when I go home. We had lots and lots of flies at our house in Ukraine. I wonder if there are any flies or spiders in here. Maybe I better give my frog a grass. (Roman, translated from Russian, April 22, 2003)

Another game, *Word Mystery*, kept the students involved, interested, and challenged. Moreover, it encouraged them to focus

on the use of language rather than on the language itself. Each student received one specific English word (a verb or a noun) such as *to summarize*, *to subtract*, or *an ingredient*, *insect*, *numeral*. Next, the student explained the meaning of the word by giving different examples of its use. If the child could not carry out this task verbally, I allowed him to draw a picture or express his ideas through a variety of body signals. Figure 2 exemplifies Roman's description of the term *numeral*.

Figure 3. Roman's description of the term *numeral*



Dima and Roman gained a lot by making personal efforts and receiving friendly assistance from the other group members. For example, on April 5, 2003, Dima tried to explain the meaning of the term *summary*: "Summary is – like summer, something warm, sunny. Is it a time of year?" Another student from our circle group helped him out by saying:

Summary means that you are putting thoughts together and making them shorter. It is like a short story about a book or about something else. If you read a summary about the book, you will know what this book is about. So, if you do not like a summary, you should not read it. (Student, April 5, 2003)

The method of playing with difficult academic terms allowed Dima and Roman to learn, remember, and enjoy them at the same time.

Another beneficial strategy for adapting Roma and Dima to the American culture was the use of multiethnic literature during our literature study circles. Multicultural literature showed the ESL students a pride and uniqueness of their cultural identity, highlighted the experiences of their own cultural group, as well as illustrated the cultural diversity of modern American society. For example, Roman and Dima took special pleasure in the rhyme and illustrations of a well-known Russian book for children, *Doctor Ibolit* by K. Chukovsky (1998). They enjoyed the experience of being able to lead other children through this book, translate the most interesting parts, and explain some elements of Russian humor. I noted Roman's response to this experience:

Back in Ukraine, my grandmother read me Chukovsky's book many times. These rhymes are funny! I like them a lot. I have actually memorized some of them by now. American children should know them too. I think I can help them understand it.
(Roman, translated from Russian, March 30, 2003)

Roman and Dima learned from multicultural literature about the history and cultural diversity of American society. They certainly benefited from the recognition that this country is composed of many different cultural groups, languages, and traditions. For example, *Child of the Owl* by Laurence Yep (1990) showed Roman and Dima challenges faced by Chinese American young people growing up in America. In addition, *Felita* by Nicholasa Mohr (1986) introduced Roman and Dima to Puerto Rican children and their struggle to adjust in an American school. As the boys related to the book characters and learned from their life experiences, they saw themselves and their own potentials with a different perspective. "I think I will be able to learn English and go to college," Dima shared his thoughts with me. "I am interested in modern technology. I hope to accomplish something important for myself and my family." For the reason that in Russian society the term *director* associates with power, authority, and importance, Roman's plan was to become one. At that moment, the boy was not sure yet what type of a director he wanted to be, but he was certain that he would be able to realize his plan: "When I grow up, I will be a director, make good money, and buy my sister a new bicycle."

I observed that Roman and Dima enjoy chatting with other group members about different subjects such as favorite foods, holidays, family gatherings, TV shows, books, music, toys. In fact, Roman did not hesitate to ask other students questions like, "Why do American calendars start with Sunday instead of Monday?" "What is Halloween?" "Why does the USA flag have so many stars?" "Why don't people in America take off their shoes indoors?" These questions made the mainstream children from our group look at their way of living from different perspectives. One girl from our literature circle tried to answer Roman's first question above:

In America, people do not have to work on Sunday. . . . Instead, they do fun things like going to the movies, watching TV, playing outside, going shopping, and visiting friends. . . . So they must like this day the best to make it the number one in American calendars. (Student, April 5, 2003)

Since there were multiple sources of friendly support and feedback from the other students, Roman's and Dima's cultural learning took place more rapidly, and they did not need to rely only on me for all the answers.

In March, Dima volunteered to share his insights about a book with our circle group for the first time. All of the children knew that Dima had never spoken to a group of students before. As soon as he finished, they applauded. The students did so because they recognized the significance of the event, and that was a cause for mutual celebration.

(3) Academic Growth

Academic growth was a hard and long process. Since it happened in all areas of education and was not easy to estimate, I did weekly focused observations of 5-10 minutes each of Dima and Roman during their regular classes. I recorded student motivations, responses, and comprehensions. I found, that despite of the boys' limited knowledge of English and their difficulty in understanding the language, their levels of motivation and responsiveness steadily grew.

For example, in March, I did not see either Roman or Dima raising their hands even one time during their regular classes. Moreover, the boys constantly asked me to translate what their teachers or other students were saying to them. I also sensed the boys' fears when the teachers or other students asked for their personal responses.

On April 2003, I noticed Dima smiling when his teacher made a joke about April Fool's Day. He clearly understood the meaning of the joke and naturally responded to it.

On May 11, 2003, as soon as I stepped into Roman's classroom, the boy whispered, "The teacher said if we finish our morning journals in time, she will give us stickers. I am done already." One day later, on May 12, 2003, I was pleased to see Dima trying to help one of his classmates with a math problem. He definitely knew how to solve it and was very excited to share it with somebody else. "Try this – how to say it in English – try to add this to that and then subtract."

Continuous dialogue with the boys' regular teachers helped me evaluate their stages of academic development as well. In fact, I asked the teachers to assess Roman's and Dima's overall academic skills by using a three-point performance indicator: *got it, on target*, and *not yet*, with *comments*. For the period of nine weeks, I received feedback on two occasions in relation to each child's academic growth indicating that the boys stepped up from *not yet* to being *on target* (see Appendix A for more details).

(4) *Social Establishment*

Looking for evidence of Roman's and Dima's social growth, I gathered such data as Roman's drawings and Dima's diagrams as a form of social self-evaluation, parental interview responses, and fragments from collaborative conversations with different school members – a lunch assistant, nurse, and recess instructor.

Throughout the period of my study, I asked Roman to draw pictures of himself at school. The first two images, dated March 18, 2003 and April 20, 2003, showed Roman alone doing his schoolwork; there were no other children or teachers in his drawing. I interpreted it a characteristic of his continuing social isolation and cultural insecurity (see Figure 3).

Figure 4. Roman's early self-portraits



Roman at school, March 18, 2003



Roman at school, April 20, 2003

However, in a last picture, dated May 12, 2003, the boy finally showed evidence of becoming part of the classroom community by adding two classmates to his drawing (see Figure 4). In fact, when I asked about these two children, his response was, "They are my friends. We play ball together."

Figure 5. Roman's later self-portrait



Roman at school with his friends, May 12, 2003

Additionally, on three occasions (March 15, April 25, and May 16) when Roman was asked to express his feelings about being at school by choosing a happy face, neutral face, or sad face, he chose the neutral face. This information indicated that, although the boy continued to feel cautious about his new school environment, his feelings did not get worse; they stayed steady suggesting a good chance for Roman's social development.

Dima completed a percentile diagram, *How I Feel About Myself in the Classroom*. He had to choose Unhappy (0-25%), Neutral (50-75%), or Happy (75-100%). Figure 5 illustrates that the student felt very unhappy in March with numbers as low as 10%. His feelings improved from 10% to 50% in April. Finally in May, he rated his feelings as 75%. Even though Dima was still far from feeling totally comfortable at school, these numbers indicated signs of his obvious social growth and communal adaptation.

Table 3. Dima’s feeling about himself in the classroom

Date: March 15, 2003		
Unhappy	Neutral	Happy
10%	50%	100%
- Date: April 10, 2003		
Unhappy	Neutral	Happy
0%	50%	100%
- Date: May 10, 2003		
Unhappy	Neutral	Happy
50%	75%	100%

Note. Bolded percentages indicate Dima’s responses.

I interviewed Roman’s mother and father on March 20, 2003 and his mother again on May 13, 2003 (see Appendix B). The first time, six out of eleven answers were pessimistic:

1. Does your child work on his English language skills at home? How?
No, he does not.
2. Does your child miss his previous Ukrainian school? If yes, what part?
Roman did not go to school back in Ukraine, but he misses his previous Ukrainian daycare, instructors, and his little friends. Most of all, he misses two little boys who used to play with our son all the time. Roman says that American children do not know how to play his favorite games, and he does not like their games either.
3. Does he talk about his new school? If yes, what are his responses?
Roman does not talk about his new school unless he is in trouble.
4. What are your child’s thoughts about his current classmates?
Roman thinks that American children make fun of his appearance and name. He does not give any more details, but we do have a concern over Roman’s acceptance in the classroom, and his overall behavioral patterns.

5. Does he talk about his teachers and other school staff? If yes, what are his responses ?

He does not talk about his teachers and other school staff.

6. Does he want to be part of after school programs or sport events?

Roman is not interested in any school events or after school programs. He likes staying home and playing computer games.

His parents raised concern about Roman's resentment and anger toward school staff and other children:

Roman's general negative and disobedient attitude toward school, teachers, and other students worries us a lot. He did not have any problems when he went to daycare in Ukraine. . . . We think that he really wants to fit in, but does not know how.

(Roman's parents, personal communication, March 20, 2003)

Two months later, on May 13, Roman's mother emphasized her son's increased interest in various school activities (i.e., an art project, field trip, talent show, and football practice), his new classmates, and use of English on a daily basis.

I sent home interview protocols (see Appendix B) twice to Dima's parents, since I was unable to interview them personally. I received rich and informative answers that helped me understand Dima's personal shyness and social timidity. Thus, on March 14, 2003, the first responses showed the parental awareness of Dima's school anxiety and his obvious attachment to the Ukrainian school structure. His parents recognized the boy's isolation from American children and his lack of interest in building social connections:

Dima misses his Ukrainian school a lot. He is constantly comparing it with the American one. It seems that everything about his previous school is better for him. . . . Dima thinks that his classmates do not like him because he is too different and does not speak English. He also thinks that they are making fun of him behind his back and calling him dull. (Dima's parents, personal communication, March 14, 2003)

The second response, received on May 16, 2003, was more optimistic. According to Dima's mother, he started to read English texts, helped her as an interpreter in the grocery store, made remarks about "his teacher being very knowledgeable and fun," and most significantly, he started to feel "fairly comfortable" in the classroom.

In mid-April, I was very pleased when the school lunch assistant pointed out Dima's willingness to sit and talk with other children during lunch and Roman's improved deportment:

I see that Dima smiles and shares small conversations with others. He does not eat alone any more and is not afraid to approach either boys or girls. Roman is doing much better, too. He is not kicking other children with his feet under the table as he used to. He has also started to say "thanks" every time he gets his food. (Lunchroom assistant, personal communication, April 18, 2003)

The school recess instructor, also interested in the topic of my research, commented:

I noticed that despite Dima's small body appearance and personal shyness, he has been noticeably accepted by other sixth-graders. Now, he plays football with them on a regular basis and seems to be in better spirits. (Recess instructor, personal

communication, May 16, 2003)

The school nurse spoke to me about Roman:

This boy used to be very angry and did not want to talk to me or other people from our school office at all. I became aware of his repulsive remarks toward others, both children and adults. Yesterday, he approached me with a cheerful face and big hug. He even wished me a Happy May Day. That was incredible! I had tears in my eyes. (School nurse, personal communication, May 2, 2003)

There was no better way to sum up the study of Roman's and Dima's social adjustments than gave them a chance to speak out for themselves:

At first, it was hard for me to go into a classroom. I felt like everybody was looking at me and staring at me. But now I feel I just thought they were. I told the children about my new baby sister. I drew pictures of her, and everybody liked it. (Roman, translated from Russian, May 10, 2003)

I did not participate in a lot of stuff, even though I really wanted to. You know, the other kids were doing certain things, and I only looked at them. I thought if I tried to speak, I would say something wrong or pronounce a word wrong. They would laugh at me, tease me, whatever. Only now I realize that I am not that different from American children, and they will not call me names, and I can be part of the group. In my heart, I believe everything will be normal. I will not have problems any longer. (Dima, translated from Russian, May 15, 2003)

Discussion of Findings

Collier's model has four major components: (1) language development, (2) cultural adaptation, (3) academic growth, and (4) social establishment (see Figure 1). All of them illustrate the processes ESL students go through while adapting to a new culture. Additionally, as I found out from my own research, these four components are interdependent and influence each other: the development or neglect of one component leads to the growth or reduction of another.

Literature study circles addressed all four components and gave me the opportunity to influence Roman's and Dima's intellectual growth as well as their adaptation to American culture through a variety of educational approaches: writer's chair sharing, use of multicultural and American literature, group dialogues and discussions, linguistic games, and peer tutoring. As a result, the literature study circles helped Roman and Dima open themselves to the new culture, connect to the classroom community, and develop socially.

Literature study circles presented Roman and Dima with all the cognitive and emotional advantages of reading: enjoying a good story, gaining insights into different ways of life, and acquiring a new vocabulary. Thus, during the two-month period, Roman's vocabulary expanded by nineteen English words and five English phrases. Moreover, the boy put this new terminology into use in literature study circles as well as his regular classes.

Giving equal emphasis to reading and writing, literature study circles visibly strengthened Dima's abilities in both areas. Dima became comfortable sharing his personal insights with the other group members and put some of his thoughts in writing. Furthermore,

I became aware of Dima's increasing attempts to use English as the main language for his verbal and written communication during our group meetings. The results of Dima's progress were also based on the evaluation of his participation, parental interview responses, and his personal written comments.

In literature study circles, language was not just a matter of skills or cognitive strategies; it was also a matter of wills, feelings, and emotions. Reading multicultural literature, such as *Titanic* by Mark Dubowski (1998), *Child of the Owl* by Laurence Yep (1990), and *Felita* by Nicholasa Mohr (1986) affirmed Roman and Dima in their ethnic pride and provided another source of validation for their own cultural experiences and perspectives. Through the use of multicultural literature, the ESL students identified the idea that diversity is central to American society and started to build a social bridge to the American way of living.

Since Roman liked to ask questions about American traditional holidays and the American style of life, he was often engaged in shared dialogues with the other group members. It helped Roman to open himself to the new culture through the experiences of his American peers. What is more, Dima started to realize that American children have the same values as Russian children and their feelings about issues like family relationships and war conflicts are alike. I considered these examples another step toward the process of cultural bonding and communal adaptation.

I recognized that, in literature study circles, mainstream students could act as counselors and tutors, help stimulate Dima's and Roman's oral language, and build their individual self-esteem. Thus, we practiced group conversations, collaborations, and book sharing that led toward the process of Roman's and Dima's social bonding and language growth. In fact, Dima took an active part in literature circle conversations. I often observed him chatting with the mainstream students about different subjects such as favorite foods, holidays, TV shows, and books. Roman also enjoyed sharing his ideas as well as small drawings with the other group members. Interestingly, when Dima and Roman could not find enough English words, they tried to find different ways of communication and expressed their thoughts through a combination of special body signals. Moreover, the mainstream students easily understood the boys and even modeled simple English expressions for Roman and Dima. Therefore, based on my observations as well as Roman's and Dima's noticeable enthusiasm and excitement, I considered different types of literature circle activities valuable extensions of the boy's thinking, inquiry, and cultural bonding.

Another important issue which Roman and Dima realized through a variety of literature circle activities such as learning games, circle dialogues, and book sharing was the difference between social English and academic English. Social English is the English that they use to carry on a conversation, the language their families want them to have so they can communicate or translate. Academic English takes up to ten years to achieve, using words such as "summarize" instead of "tell me about" and having books and materials with fewer illustrations. Thus, the varieties of educational games mentioned earlier created a meaningful framework in which both academic and social English were mutually supported and developed. In addition, the book sharing experiences activated students' cognitive powers and built their academic vocabulary. As a result, Roman and Dima were supported in developing their academic and social English through challenging and exciting experiences of literature study circles.

The friendly atmosphere and social support in literature study circles definitely helped Roman and Dima feel safe and connected to their mainstream peers. Everyone and especially the ESL students enjoyed and benefited from playing an important role in circle group activities. The boys were not afraid to speak out, use new terminology, and share their personal ideas through shared reading, writing, and drawing. They felt comfortable speaking English, without fear of ridicule and rejection. Roman and Dima learned that they were important and welcomed just as they are and that learning a new language was helping them become communicative in more

than one way. Positive experiences like these were likely not only to improve Dima's and Roman's language skills and academic performances but also to prepare them for effective and non-confrontational interaction with their peers beyond the classroom.

Parental interviews and collaborative conversations with school staff filled possible gaps that I could not always address through classroom-based observations. Thus, I was able to establish a better understanding of Roman's and Dima's personal characters, their attitude toward the American school system, levels of self-confidence, and academic struggles and successes. Based on the data from these sources, I was pleased to indicate more signs of Roman's and Dima's social adjustment to the new school system and their personal connection to our literature study circles. In addition, this data provided me with information about Roman's and Dima's positive attitude changes toward their classmates and teachers.

For Roman and Dima a sense of community, of inclusion in a social group of their peers, was as important as individual prominence. The organization of literature study circles was based on cooperative learning that emphasized developing social skills as well as learning language content. This approach responded to Roman's and Dima's social and academic needs, made their work more effective, and helped the boys develop the collaborative skills needed to support and empower them in their interactions beyond the school, in the family, in their social lives, and in the new society.

The data and findings indicate that, while academic growth and social development are important to students, they are particularly valuable for the ESL students like Roman and Dima who are still learning the principles and language of the new culture. The implementation of literature study circles into school curriculum can provide a culturally appropriate learning environment that raise the levels of academic achievement of minority students, promote their cultural adaptation, and foster second-language acquisition. Literature study circles also can provide a supportive social environment where ESL students can develop and rehearse their social skills.

Limitations and Weaknesses

Now that I have come to the end of my research, I feel that I could have fostered Roman's and Dima's literacy together with their social development more efficiently if I had introduced the boys to a dialogue journal technique as well. Dialogue journals can give ESL students another secure way of communicating with a teacher and reviewing their own thinking. This may be particularly important to shy and quiet students like Dima or fearful and self-protective types like Roman. Both boys are newcomers to American society, cannot speak English well, do not understand the mainstream culture, and therefore, are socially lost. In dialogue journals, I can treat students as equal partners in a conversation and write back in terms of the issues raised by them. Moreover, while writing in Standard English, I can model the use of structures and vocabulary as well as offer students the opportunity to adopt these forms in their own writing. In addition, since total rejection of the students' home language is equal to rejection of the students themselves, the dialogue journals can also be used to promote native language literacy with a connection of literacy in English.

Second, children of diverse backgrounds have their own ideas about their social and intellectual powers; they are capable of assessing their own progresses in learning. With this in mind, I will consider incorporating student self-assessment into my future work with students of diverse backgrounds. Rather than a measure of student language learning and social accomplishment, it will serve as a legitimate record of how they perceive themselves academically and socially.

Overall, I am very pleased and professionally satisfied with the findings, dynamics, and methodological procedures of this

research. However, dialogue journals and student self-assessment techniques might have provided more depth to my study, helped me gain more information about my students' social struggles, and helped build a stronger communal support for them.

Conclusion

From the beginning, my research about the connection between literature study circles and the social development of ESL students incorporated the philosophy of interdependency among four vital processes: language development, academic growth, cultural adaptation, and social establishment.

As I found out from my literature review, considerable information about the literacy development and academic progresses of students of diverse backgrounds is currently available in journal articles and books. However, much of it does not cover the subjects of communal bonding and social establishment. The overall theme of my research, on the other hand, may help inform educators about these issues, which are faced every day in teaching ESL children or working with them in different school settings. I especially emphasized the importance of social development as I realized the significance of this issue for ESL students.

My idea was for the ESL students, Roman and Dima, to be actively involved in developing their own social identity in the classroom through the implementation of literature study circles. The circles were oriented toward collaborative learning, communal support, and cultural appreciation. Thus, Roman and Dima did not rely only on themselves or me for all the help they required; there were multiple sources of support and feedback from circle group members. Under these circumstances, the processes of language development, academic growth, and cultural adaptation took place more rapidly. Along the way, I began to see the development of social establishment as well. I saw that literature study circles transformed the students' way of thinking about themselves and their classroom community. I felt that I was a better teacher because of this project.

Other significant observations about literature study circles that benefit ESL students and their teachers included:

- Literature study groups were less formal and more student-oriented; they were based on cooperation and peer tutoring to help ESL group members with the variety of their needs.
- Literature study circles had positive effects on the academic achievement and language development of ESL students.
- During literature study circles, rather than learning about linguistic rules and structures from a textbook, ESL students observed and practiced their use in real life.
- In literature study circles, language and cultural development took place through a diversity of meaningful and challenging activities.
- In literature study circles, ESL students had an opportunity to be recognized for the knowledge they brought.
- Literature study circles helped foster the development of higher-level thinking skills among ESL students.
- In literature study circles, well-written multicultural literature provided ESL students with the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences and practice the use of their native language skills.

- Literature study circles provided a cultural bonding between mainstream and ESL students; thus, they encouraged them to interact and communicate with each other outside the classroom.
- Literature study circles helped ESL students maintain their cultural uniqueness and expand positive changes in self-perception.

I realize that, in the United States, many teachers seem satisfied with the notion that the country is the world's greatest democracy and ignore the social and political context of schooling. Consequently, they continue to teach without questioning the inequalities and limitations of the ESL educational system. In other words, they are not acting as informed educators of the 21st century.

Teachers with a commitment to the value of social diversity recognize and accept the challenge of using new forms of ESL education. They may want to consider literature study circles as an appropriate educational approach for the language development of immigrant children and their union with mainstream culture. Through literature study circles and other creative methods of teaching, they can work toward a bright future offering all children a wealth of education and social success.

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Appendix A Indicator of Student's Academic Performances

1. *Not Yet*: The task is attempted and some effort is made. There are fragments of accomplishment but little or no success.
2. *On Target*: Part of the task is accomplished, but there is lack of evidence of understanding.
3. *Got It*: The task is accomplished. Errors are minor, so teacher is confident that understanding is adequate.

Comments:

Appendix B Parent Interview Protocol

1. What language does your child prefer to speak at home?
2. Does your child work on his English language skills at home? How?
3. Is he trying to read any English texts? If so, what kind?
4. Is your child watching any TV programs in English? What kind?
5. Does your child miss his previous Ukrainian school? If yes, what part?
6. Does he talk about his new school? If yes, what are his responses?
7. Does he talk about his teachers and other school staff? If yes, what are his responses?

8. Does he want to be part of after school programs or sport events?
9. Is your child planning to continue his education after high school?
10. Do you have any personal concerns regarding your child's social needs?