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Enacting Quality Talk Discussions About Text: From Knowing the Model to Navigating the Dynamics of Dialogic Classroom Culture

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> This is my 14th fall as an elementary school teacher. The students and I will arrive on the first day with new ideas and old experiences, and then we will spend much of the year navigating our way to a shared culture.
>
> "Mrs. S.," Third-Grade Teacher, September 2011.

There is a great deal of practical wisdom embedded in the sentiments expressed by Mrs. S. Each school year, teachers and students acquire knowledge and experience as well as a sense of expectations prominent in a given classroom culture, particularly as it relates to norms about talk. Such talk norms are often explicitly highlighted on wall posters (e.g., "Listen and Follow Instructions"; Alter & Haydon, 2017) and emphasize teacher control (e.g., verbal behaviors or compliance with adults). By comparison, norms pertaining to interpretive authority (Mayer, 2009) over content are implicit in teacher's discursive pedagogy. As a case in point, consider an ***I**nitiate-**R**espond-**E**valuate* (IRE) pattern of classroom discussion (Mehan, 1979). No teacher or student needs an orientation to this dialogic pattern of a teacher asking a text- or content-based question to students, then calling on a student who, in turn, responds, followed by the teacher evaluating the sufficiency or accuracy of the response (Cazden, 1988). Indeed, from schools in the United States to South Africa, Mainland China, Taiwan, or Switzerland, we have found this pattern is common currency in classroom discussions, despite the relative ineffectiveness of the approach (e.g., Murphy & Quality Talk Team, 2021). This type of discursive pedagogy implicitly reinforces norms of teacher control and interpretive authority. Furthermore, Mrs. S. clearly understood that traces of these norms travel with the teacher and the students as they progress through their careers and schooling. More importantly, however, she deeply embraced the idea that there are always opportunities (e.g., new school year, teacher-researcher partnership, literacy coaching, or professional development) to reflect on one's pedagogical practices and to work with students to establish or shift classroom culture.

Although the conversation with Mrs. S. occurred more than a decade ago, we often share her wisdom with teachers implementing Quality Talk discussions in their classrooms, because altering established discursive practices is a process—a process that involves reflecting on current practices, knowledge building, and navigating the fluid dynamics of dialogic classroom culture. Such a process can not only take a good deal of time to instantiate, but also like most pedagogical change (Gregoire, 2003), it can be simultaneously perplexing and exciting (e.g., Murphy & Firetto, 2018). Quality Talk (QT) is a teacher-facilitated, student-centered small-group discussion approach whose aim is to promote students' high-level comprehension (Murphy, 2018). By high-level comprehension, we refer to "students' ability to think critically and analytically about, around, and with text and content" (Murphy, 2018, p. xi). As a discussion approach, QT emerged from a multi-pronged exploration of the (a) effectiveness of various small-group discussion approaches in enhancing students' high-level comprehension (see Murphy et al., 2009), a detailed (b) investigation of the instructional framing (Wilkinson et al., 2019), and (c) an analysis of the nature of the discourse that emerges in most effective approaches to discussion (Soter et al., 2009). The initial resulting discussion model has been enhanced based on our collaborative

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work with teachers and contemporary investigations (see Murphy & Firetto, 2018).

Over the last decade, the resulting QT discussion model has shown to be effective at improving students' comprehension and critical-analytic thinking and reasoning both orally and in writing across a host of content areas and grades including elementary language arts (e.g., Murphy et al., 2017) and mathematics (e.g., Lloyd & Murphy, in press), high school chemistry and physics (e.g., Murphy et al., 2018), college English and ancient Chinese (e.g., Tzean, 2021), and undergraduate elementary mathematics teacher education (e.g., Lloyd & Murphy, in press). In addition to improving high-level comprehension, QT has been shown to improve oral reading fluency in an array of diverse schools in the United States (e.g., Firetto et al., 2019) and in English language learning contexts including South Africa (e.g., Sefhedi et al., 2021), Taiwan (e.g., Chen & Lo, 2021), and Mainland China (Wei et al., 2021).

As we mentioned, implementing QT is a process that unfolds over time as the teacher and students work collaboratively to learn the various aspects of the approach and to navigate the dynamics of altering longstanding patterns of discussion that make up the dialogic culture of a classroom. In this article, we overview the components of the QT discussion model, emphasizing the aspects of each component that are critical for dialogic culture change. Having established the reader's initial knowledge of the model, we then share what we understand to be dynamic factors that teachers must navigate as they build a dialogic culture with their students. Finally, we propose considerations for discourse-intensive pedagogy in small-group discussions.

An Illustrative Case

"Ms. Legere" was a fifth-grade teacher with 3 years of teaching experience in various elementary grades. She identified as a White, cisgendered woman, with a middle-class socio-economic status, and taught in an elementary school in a large town with suburban neighborhoods situated in a rural county. The school population was predominantly White and more than 50% of the students received free or reduced lunch, but all students had supplies provided by parents or guardians and the school. Three of the students participating in the group presented as girls and three students presented as boys; the small group included one Student of Color and five students who presented as White. Our research team working with Ms. Legere was comprised of six cisgendered women with advanced degrees, two of whom were born and raised in Mainland China. The remaining women identified as White and of European (n = 3) or Cuban (n = 1) descent. Three members of our team were multilingual.

Contextually, the school made use of a basal reading series and the students read at least one major text from the reader each week. The texts varied in genre, but the text difficulty and length increased over the course of the school year. These transcripts were taken from her first year of experience employing QT as a discussion approach. However, most of the students in her class learned about QT and took part in weekly QT discussions as fourth graders.

Transcript #1 (Figure 1) is an excerpt from Ms. Legere's baseline discussion timepoint and Transcript #2 (Figure 2) was taken from Ms. Legere's second QT discussion timepoint after she took part in a 2-day Quality Talk professional development (PD). During the 2-day PD, teachers acquired knowledge about the QT model, took part in QT discussions as facilitator and participant, learned to code transcripts of classroom discussion, watched videos of QT discussions and made judgments about teacher talk moves, received instruction regarding the QT student lessons, and collaborated with the QT team to design their QT literacy journal and a schedule for implementing QT in their classroom (see Murphy & Firetto, 2018 for extended description of the PD). Transcript #3 (Figure 3) was taken from her seventeenth discussion timepoint. Over the school year, Ms. Legere facilitated approximately 75 QT discussions across the three discussion groups (i.e., 25 discussions per group or approximately one per week) in her class covering texts from the basal reader. Each discussion was approximately 20 minutes in duration. Ms. Legere also implemented 12 QT discourse lessons (i.e., Lessons 1–6 on Types of Questions, Lessons 7–10 on Argumentation, Lessons 11–12 on Written Argumentation/Compare and Contrast).

Over the school year, Ms. Legere also took part in seven ongoing PD sessions, approximately once a month, with QT discourse coaches. Prior to each session, Ms. Legere and a discussion coach each coded the middle 10 minutes or 80 turns of a recent discussion from her class. During the ongoing PD, Ms. Legere and the coach discussed their coding and "shining moments" or outstanding episodes from the discussion, brainstormed about possible ways to navigate challenging dynamics that she was experiencing, and set goals for the next discussion. Importantly, our findings from both the professional development sessions, QT discussion lessons, and coaching show that Ms. Legere implemented QT with very high fidelity. As a result, Ms. Legere experienced many, many shining moments in her facilitated discussions and the improvement in her facilitation and students' critical-analytic discourse is particularly evident in the discussion transcripts. That

Figure 1
Transcript of Quality Talk Discussion Prior to Implementation

Transcript #1 (story: Island of the Blue Dolphins)

Turn	Speaker	Notes	Codes/Types
1.	Teacher	What clues do we have on this page about the setting, where this story is taking place? Give us some clues.	TQ
2.	Student 2	There's a lot of water and it's rocky.	
3.	Teacher	Ok, a lot of water, rocky. Anything else? Any other type of words? Give us a description.	
4.	Student 13	It's an island, it's deserted where nobody is but her.	
5.	Teacher	Okay, what clues on the page lead you to believe that? There's certain words, certain words kind of pop in my head. Yeah, go ahead.	TQ
6.	Student 7	There was a friendly ship that came and picked up some of the people but she stayed behind with her brother, but then he died because of wild dogs.	
7.	Teacher	So everyone left except her. Good. Student 4?	
8.	Student 4	Um, it says on a rugged island 75 miles off of California.	
9.	Teacher	A rugged island. That's what popped in my head, too. What do you know about something that might be rugged? Is it nice and clean, like a resort that she's at?	TQ
10.	Student 11	It's not that, it's sort of abandoned.	
11.	Teacher	Kind of abandoned. Do you think that might foreshadow something in the future? Do you see that causing a problem? Is it going to foreshadow something happening?	TQ
12.	Student 6	She might hurt herself.	
13.	Teacher	Yeah. Okay. Why do you think she would hurt herself?	TQ
14.	Student 3	It's pretty easy to fall.	
15.	Teacher	Okay, it's easy to fall. Rugged terrain, you might trip on something. Student 7?	
16.	Student 7	She is on it and if she needs help with something like if she fell there wouldn't be anyone to help.	
17.	Teacher	Yeah. I was thinking that, too. If you're alone, kind of scared to be alone, if you get hurt, no one there to help you.	

Note. Transcript #1 is an excerpt from Ms. Legere's baseline discussion, conducted prior to implementation of QT, including participation in the initial QT professional development (O'Dell, 2013). The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

said, she also experienced challenges in navigating some aspects of the discussion dynamics. We use this illustrative case throughout the article to provide specific examples of both the components of the QT model and potential tensions that may arise as teachers and students build a QT-enhanced dialogic culture.

The Quality Talk Model

The QT model is comprised of four components: an ideal instructional frame, discourse elements, a set of teacher modeling and scaffolding discussion moves, and pedagogical principles.

Figure 2
Transcript of Quality Talk Discussion Early in Implementation

Transcript #2 (story: Ten Mile Day, Discussion #2)

Turn	Speaker	Talk	Codes/Types
1.	Teacher	On page 159 at the end it said, "The Chinese workers had once again proven themselves." What do you think that means if they had once again proven themselves?	AQ
2.	Student 3	That they've already accomplished this.	
3.	Student 5	That they've already went before a different time [claim], because on 159, it says ... "oh, their biggest rivals." [evidence] So, they could've made an accomplishment first, like laid down 3 miles of track in one day and the next group laid down 5 miles in one day, and then they laid 10 miles in one day again [reason].	EE
4.	Teacher	Ok, I'm going to ask an uptake question. Do you think that their only accomplishments were building the railroad, or do you think they might have down other things that were accomplishments?	AQ/UT/ HLT TM
5.	Student 5	I think they might have done other things that were accomplishments [claim] because to lay down 10 miles of railroad tracks, I don't think even our parents could do that, because it's just too hard. [reason] So, I would think that these guys would have done multiple other things to get themselves ready to do it [reason] and just because they needed more money [reason].	EE
6.	Student 1	Yeah, it says they'd get 4 times their pay. I bet they'd get a lot of motivation from that to do it.	
7.	Teacher	Ok, so I'm going to ask you another uptake question, for Student 1. Do you think they were only motivated by money?	AQ/UT/ HLT TM
8.	Student 1	No. [claim] I think they just wanted to do it because they could help people [reason] and everybody would be really happy [reason] and they' would be in the newspaper, probably [reason].	EE
9.	Student 5	I don't think [implied claim] ... I think it was probably also if they had families that it would be better for their families [claim] because it would be safer to travel [reason] and easier to travel [reason].	EE

Note. Transcript #2 is an excerpt from week 2 of Ms. Legere's QT discussions (Fraser, 2013). The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

Ideal Instructional Frame

The ideal *instructional frame* is a set of conditions specifying the structure of QT discussions as carried out in practice. Often, implementing these structural features of QT gives way to concomitant visible changes in the dialogic culture of the class (e.g., arrangement of seats for small-group discussion). As elucidated in Figure 4, these conditions include practical considerations such as group size and composition, duration of the discussion, stance toward or goal for reading a text, pre-discussion and post-discussion activities, and establishing a set of discourse expectations. In addition, the instructional frame outlines new and distinct teacher and student roles that represent a significant departure from

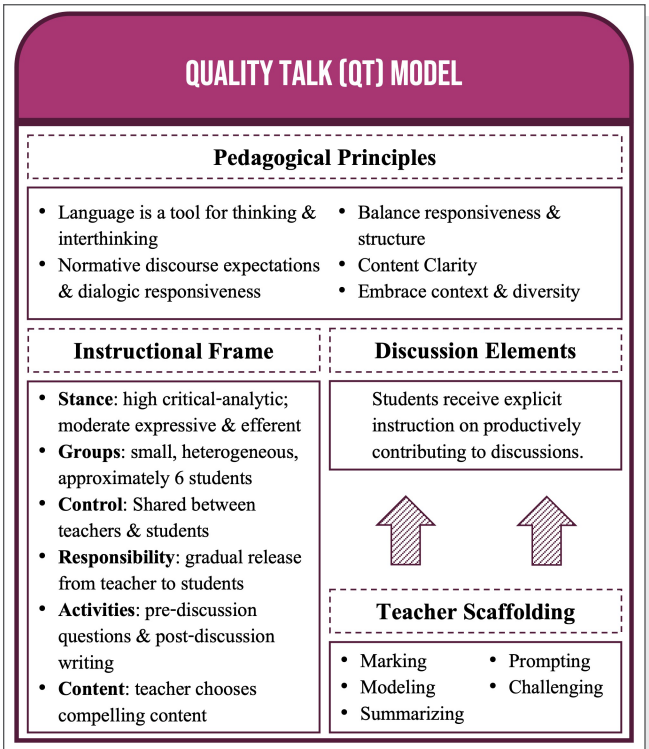
Figure 3
Transcript of Quality Talk Discussion Late in Implementation

Transcript #3 (story: Titanic, Discussion #17)

Turn	Speaker	Notes	Codes/Types
1.	Student 1	What if the Titanic hadn't sunk?	AQ/HLT/CQ
2.	Student 5	So, there wouldn't be a movie, or a book about it. It wouldn't be an important event. It would be noticed that it was this very big ship that made it to New York.	ET
3.	Student 1	I disagree [claim] with you because it still have been a part of history [reason] because the Titanic was very great [reason] and there is a lot of news about it and how it couldn't sink. [reason] … But it still was the biggest ship.	EE
4.	Student 6	So, I understand what you were trying to say and what your point is, but it's hard to tell … but a reason I'm going to support Student 5 [claim] is that basically what happened was it sank and they said it was the unsinkable. [reason] The reasons we know about it now is because they said it was the unsinkable and it did sink, there was too little rafts [evidence], they didn't fill every raft [evidence]. So, I think it wouldn't be noticed as much for some of these reasons.	EE
5.	Student 1	I agree with you with that. But I also think it wouldn't be just as famous as it was because it sunk.	
6.	Student 4	Yeah, it wouldn't be as famous as it is now. [claim] Because now I don't think that most of us would know about the Titanic because today there are bigger ships today. [reason] We wouldn't know about it because of its size. [reason]	EE
7.	Student 6	Yes, [claim] and other ships have definitely sailed and they would probably said some of them weren't going to be sunk and they made it through, [reason] and we don't know about those ships much. I'm not sure I have read about any ships like that [evidence].	EE
8.	Student 1	I get what you were saying and I get that you are trying to tell me that that wouldn't be as famous, and I agree with that. But I also think it was [claim] it would have been in a museum [reason] because it was the first big ship to ever be made. [reason] Also there may be bigger ships today, but it would still be famous because it was the first one ever made. I watched the movie [evidence] and I also read a chapter book about it. So, it said in the chapter book, not this one but in that chapter book, it said it is the first big ship ever to be made because it was three football fields long [evidence].	EE
9.	Student 5	I disagree because the thing is it said unsinkable, and if it didn't sink, there's nothing really important about that. I think the ship would only be recognized in size. [claim] Some ships, like tour ships, these papers show how big it is, [evidence] so that'd probably be used to show the Titanic how big it is, compared to the ship. [reason] But I don't think it would be that important until any other.	EE
10.	Student 1	I disagree with you again because you guys are saying it is smaller than the ships today. But I am saying that it was the first one to ever to be made. [claim] So I think it would have been a museum [reason] and also the unsinkable ship, it would said that, it would have been a miracle because ships can always sink [reason].	EE

Note. Transcript #3 is an excerpt from week 17 of Ms. Legere's discussions (Ballard & Archbold, 2013). At this point, Ms. Legere had facilitated approximately 48 QT discussions and participated in six coaching sessions. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

Figure 4
Quality Talk Discussion Model



Note. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

the traditional IRE pattern of classroom discussions (see Tables 1 and 2). We have found that adapting to these new roles is critical for shifting the dialogic culture of a classroom (Wei et al., 2018).

For instance, like Ms. Legere, teachers implementing QT in their classroom act as intentional instructors by helping their students gain the requisite knowledge for participating productively in QT discussions. This includes providing explicit instruction about QT discourse elements (i.e., question and response types) and guided practice using those discourse elements prior to discussion. During the discussion itself, the teacher's role becomes one of fading facilitator, supporting students' productive talk (i.e., discourse elements) and, over time, releasing control of the discourse and interpretive authority to students. As students take on this responsibility, the teacher acts as an effortful evaluator, providing feedback and guidance only when necessary and in a way that does not take interpretive authority away from the students. These changes can be observed both in the teachers' discourse as well as their physical presence within the discussion setting (e.g., teacher as sun to teacher as participant; see Figure 5).

This transition in the teacher's role occurs concurrently with changes in students' roles in discussion. Importantly, while most students are accustomed to answering teachers' questions (e.g., Transcript #1), very few have experience asking meaningful questions or sharing their own, authentic ideas. As students learn about productive discussion and observe the teacher demonstrating such discussion, students shift from answering the teacher's questions to asking questions and providing their original ideas about the text. As demonstrated in Transcript #3, during an exceptional QT discussion, students take on the bulk of the responsibility for their learning by responding to and evaluating each other's ideas, ultimately taking on interpretive authority of the text and thus their understanding of it.

Discourse Elements

Like Vygotsky (1978), we view talk as an externalization of thought. As such, the *discourse elements*, the second model component, are of central importance in QT. In fact, we know that student talk characterized by high incidences of QT discourse elements is strongly related to improvements in students' high-level comprehension (e.g., Murphy et al., 2018). The discourse elements refer to specific question and response types that represent productive teacher and student interactions during small-group discussions about text (see Soter et al., 2009). Authentic questions, as defined in Table 3, are open ended and invite students to contribute their own thinking to the discussion, while test questions have prespecified answers and often invite students to revoice or report someone else's thinking (Nystrand, 1997).

As students take control of authentic questioning, we have observed less teacher talk, decreases in test questions, and the presence of uptake (i.e., when someone asks a follow-up question about what someone else said previously; Table 3), not to mention higher engagement (e.g., Murphy et al., 2018). As we can see in Transcript #1, prior to the initial professional development, Ms. Legere's questions in turns 1, 5, and 9 simply quiz her students' ability to recall the text, holding them to a literal interpretation of the content. In contrast, the authentic questions posed by both Ms. Legere and her students in Transcripts #2 and #3 open the dialogic floor to generalization, analysis, and speculation as well as connections to outside texts and students' shared and personal experiences.

The discourse elements also include individual and co-constructed responses (see Table 3). We draw on Jacoby and Ochs (1995) in conceptualizing our understanding of co-construction: "…joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance….the *co-* prefix in *co-construction* is intended to cover a range of interactional processes….

Table 1
Teacher Roles

Role	Definition	Examples
Intentional instructor	Teachers provide explicit instruction for students on the discourse elements essential to high-quality discussions	■ Mini lessons on how to ask questions that elicit elaborated responses and how to answer questions with valid reasons and evidence ■ Guided practice with modeling of the discourse elements ■ Pre-discussion and post-discussion activities
Fading facilitator	Teachers share control of turns and topic with students while gradually releasing more responsibility to students over time	■ Using discourse moves to guide students toward engaging in productive talk and to maintain the flow of discussion and ensure participation from everyone. ■ Using *prompting* to encourage justification for students' responses with reasons or evidence ■ Fading from discussion while students begin to engage in an open style of discourse
Effortful evaluator	Teachers provide evaluation on student's high-level comprehension	■ When a student offers an elaborated explanation, teachers gauge the quality of talk and provide formative feedback for enhancing students' learning ■ Teachers provide summative feedback after a talk by suggesting future goals, including specific goals (e.g., each student ask one prepared authentic question for future discussions) or general goals (e.g., no interruptions during the talk)

co-construction does not necessarily entail affiliative or supportive interactions" (p. 171). In fact, many of our response types are rooted in principles of argumentation. For example, students are encouraged to explain, elaborate, and justify their thinking with reasons and evidence (i.e., elaborated explanations, see Transcripts #2 and #3). Over time, students learn to support their peers' contributions by providing additional reasons and evidence from the text (i.e., cumulative talk), and begin to manifest their ability to evaluate and challenge the strength of their peers' evidence and reasoning (i.e., exploratory talk; Mercer, 2000). For example, in contrast to Transcript #1 where Ms. Legere determines the correct answers to a question, in Transcript #3, we see the students demonstrate interpretive authority by continually challenging each other's contributions and thinking. Such dialogic shifts promote students' high-level comprehension.

Teacher Modeling and Scaffolding

The third component of the QT model, *teacher modeling and scaffolding*, refers to a set of teacher discussion moves that facilitate students' productive talk during QT discussions. As described in Table 4, the five teacher moves include challenging, marking, modeling, prompting, and summarizing. We have chosen to emphasize these moves in QT because they have been shown to support students' high-level comprehension during discussion (Wei et al., 2018). In essence, these moves are tools that teachers use in their role as an effortful evaluator and a fading facilitator without taking interpretive authority away from their students, and enable the teacher to model the discourse skills they want their students to exhibit (Anderson et al., 2001). For instance, during the second QT discussion, Ms. Legere modeled uptake questions as a way of signaling to her students that they should do the same during discussion (see Transcript #2).

Effective application of the teacher moves requires not only knowing what they entail, but also being able to analyze the discussion in real time to recognize where these moves would be most advantageous. For instance, a teacher may recognize that their students are posing a plethora of connection questions but no high-level thinking questions, or that they are not challenging each other. Making these impromptu decisions takes knowledge and practice. As such, teachers participating in the QT professional development are shown clips of challenging moments during discussion and then asked to reflect upon if and how they would use teacher scaffolding moves to help bolster students' productive talk. This experience allowed Ms. Legere to utilize teacher moves strategically during early QT discussions, prompting shifts in

Table 2
Student Roles

Role	Definition	Examples
Engaged learner	Students must engage in the discussions by generating authentic questions and responding to questions using reasons and evidence	■ Learning discourse tools, including types of authentic questions ■ Learning to generate elaborated responses and engage in exploratory talk with challenges ■ Participating pre-discussion activities, such as writing authentic questions and reviewing prior knowledge
Thoughtful interpreter	Students interpret the text and content as well as the talk within the group	■ Actively interpretating associated discourse, and regarding themselves as a source of knowledge ■ Initiating authentic questions, providing well-reasoned responses, and examining each other's argument
Reflexive responder	Students learn and reflect on the discourse generated by their peers and the teacher	■ Students engage in productive talk by learning and appropriating others' discourse moves ■ Students may utilize teacher feedbacks on better at asking and responding to questions and guiding themselves and their peers toward deeper text and content understandings as well

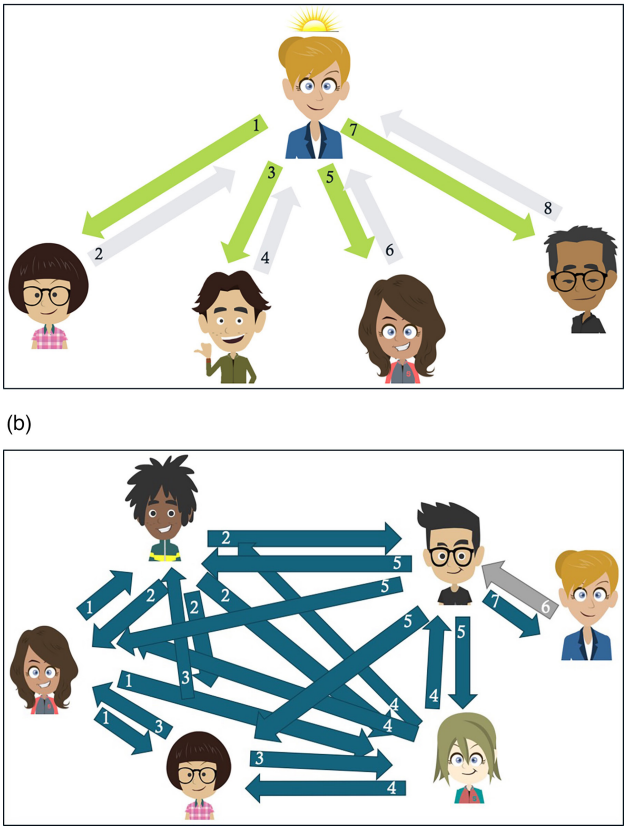
the discursive culture as students took on responsibility for the talk and thus allowing her to fade her use of such facilitative discussion moves.

Pedagogical Principles

Pedagogical principles, the final component of the QT model, refer to six beliefs about discussion-based pedagogy that we see as key conditions for shifting dialogic classroom culture. The first two pedagogical principles are closely related to the ideal instructional frame: (1) establish *normative discourse expectations* and (2) have *content clarity*. Normative discourse expectations serve as "ground rules" for the discussion, and thus, set the boundaries for verbal exchanges between discussion members. For example, prior to each discussion Ms. Legere read a set of ground rules (e.g., "We don't need to raise hands."; "We question or argue about ideas not people."; or If we disagree, we ask 'Why...?' and 'How...?'"; see Murphy & Firetto, 2018) that are designed to support the kinds of productive talk and participation patterns we hope to see during QT discussions. It is also important that teachers come to each discussion with content clarity. That is, a strong understanding of the text and the key content they want their students to take away from the discussion. We encourage teachers to prepare "back-pocket" authentic questions related to their content goals that they can use to foster students' text- and content-based understandings or to redirect students' thinking regarding common misconceptions pertaining to the text or content.

The third pedagogical principle, *talk is a tool for thinking and interthinking*, refers to the belief that talk is the external representation of students' thinking and that language can be used to share information and construct knowledge together (Vygotsky, 1978). As we mentioned previously, it is essential that teachers and students value their interactions during QT discussions as a social mode of thinking during which teachers and students can make sense of a text together. By engaging in this collective sense making, students internalize these skills and are eventually able to utilize them individually. Indeed, Leontyev (1981) held that through social interaction, the participants in the discussion "intermingle" and come to form part of the internal makeup of the group members. *Embrace space and diversity within the discourse*, the fourth pedagogical principle, is also related to the discourse elements and refers to the fact that no two discussions will be the same. Each student brings their own perspectives, experiences, and prior knowledge to the discussion—perspectives that will manifest as unique

Figure 5
Discourse Patterns



Note. Panel a: Teacher-directed discourse pattern in which the teacher acts as the "SUN." The teacher asks more of the questions and one student answers each question. Panel b: Student-centered discourse pattern in which students ask most of the questions, multiple students answer each question, and student responses are elaborated. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

authentic questions or responses to others' questions. To successfully enact QT, teachers must value these individual differences as a core strength that their students bring to discussion.

The two final pedagogical principles are closely related to teacher modeling and scaffolding. *Gradual release of responsibility* refers to the process of the teacher releasing control of the discussion to the students. For instance, as can be seen in Transcript #1, at the start of the year, Ms. Legere asked all of the questions and held interpretive authority over the text. She then released some control after the initial professional development, allowing her students to contribute their thinking to the discussion. Finally, by the end of the year, the students were asking most questions and evaluating each other's thinking. The sixth pedagogical principle, *balance responsiveness and structure*, refers to the balancing act required to ensure that discussions remain productive while releasing control to the students. That is, while it is critical for students to have the opportunity to contribute their thinking and experiences during discussion, the teacher must provide enough structure to ensure productive learning about the text. Over the years, we have found that teachers differentially embrace these various pedagogical principles and still successfully enact QT discussions. Indeed, it is the navigation of the tensions characterizing many of these principles that seem more important than some uniform level of belief regarding their centrality to discussion. In the next section, we detail three areas that teachers and their students often co-navigate as they reorient themselves to new expectations for classroom interaction.

Navigating the Dynamics of Dialogic Culture

As we mentioned, a primary goal of Quality Talk (QT) is for students to engage in critical-analytic thinking about, around, and with text during discussion (Murphy, 2018). Students are encouraged to talk not just *about* what is explicitly stated in the text, but also *around* and *with* the text—making connections between the text and other things they have read or experienced as well as exploring the deeper, underlying content or views represented in the text (Murphy & Quality Talk Team, 2021). This goal is directly related to the dialogic culture QT supports, including an open participation pattern and students holding interpretive authority. That said, instantiating a new culture of dialogue means that once common talk norms will, potentially, be at odds with QT discourse practices. What we have found is that recognizing and finding ways to navigate these tensions improves teachers' efficacy for fostering students' critical-analytic thinking and comprehension through discussion (Murphy & Firetto, 2018; Murphy & Quality Talk Team, 2021). In this section, we highlight some of the more common tensions that arise during our ongoing discussion coaching with teachers implementing QT.

Balancing Content and Discourse Goals

In the early days of implementing QT, teachers frequently voice concerns about the challenge of balancing their content and discourse goals. A teacher's *content goals* are the main ideas or understandings that the teacher wishes for the students to take away from the text. For example, in Transcript #2, Ms. Legere may have wanted students to come away from the discussion with an understanding of the experiences of the immigrant groups who worked to construct railroads

Table 3
Discourse Elements

	Type	Definition
Question Types	Authentic question (AQ)	Has multiple acceptable answers; speaker is genuinely interested in knowing how others will respond; answer is not pre-specified
	Test question (TQ)	Presupposes a particular answer; answer is explicitly stated in the text or is generally known
	Uptake question (UT)	Asks about something that someone else said previously
	Speculation question (SQ)	Elicits consideration of alternative possibilities
	High-level thinking question (HLT)	Elicits generalization or analysis by engaging in inductive or deductive reasoning
	Connection question (CQ)	Elicits a connection to another text (e.g., books, movies, TV shows, artwork, website) or shared knowledge
	Affective question (AF)	Elicits connections between the text and students' feelings or life experiences
Response Types	Elaborated explanation (EE)	A statement with a claim (i.e., position, opinion, or belief) that is based on at least two independent, conjunctive, or causally connected forms of support (i.e., reasons or evidence)
	Exploratory talk (ET)	Learners build, evaluate, and share knowledge over several turns; there must be an element of challenge
	Cumulative talk (CT)	Learners build positively, but uncritically, on what others have said over several turns; does not include an element of challenge

Table 4
Quality Talk Teacher Modeling and Scaffolding Discussion Moves

Type	Definition	Example
Summarizing	Overviewing what has been said	"Let us pause and summarize what we have said…"
Modeling	Explicitly stating what she/he is going to do before doing it	"I'm going to ask an uptake question…"
Marking	Complimenting a specific aspect of the discourse	"That's great use of evidence from the text, Ruth!"
Prompting	Encouraging a student to elaborate on a response	"So why do you think that?"
Challenging	Asking a student or group to consider another point of view	"I am not sure I quite agree with you. Have you considered…"

across the United States. At the same time, she had *discourse goals* for the students, which included behaviors or markers of productive talk that she wanted the students to engage in during the discussion. The week that Transcript #2 took place, students had just learned about authentic and test questions, so Ms. Legere may have wanted students to ask authentic questions during this discussion. Both the content and discourse goals are important and sometimes it seems as though they cannot be simultaneously monitored or achieved.

As a case in point, in Transcript #2, Ms. Legere relied on prior her discussion norms to achieve her content goals at the expense of the predetermined discourse goals. Specifically, although there was a shift from Transcripts #1 to #2 with fewer test questions and more authentic questions, all questions were still raised by Ms. Legere, and focused on what she thought was important for students to discuss. However, her content-driven approach inhibited students from asking their own authentic questions (i.e., discourse goal) about, around, and with the text.

Importantly, there are ways that teachers can improve their ability to navigate this strain between content and discourse goals. For example, reflecting on the discussions they facilitate often provides teachers with valuable insight into balancing these goals. During her ongoing QT professional development, Ms. Legere watched and coded the discourse from these discussions. Through coding the discourse, she recognized how she maintained control of the talk and limited student questioning. Ms. Legere reflected on how she was concerned about the students getting off the central topic. In response, we emphasized the importance of monitoring the extent to which students' talk is still *around* and *with* the text or content. By the seventeenth discussion timepoint, excerpted in Transcript #3, Ms. Legere has accomplished the goal of supporting students' independence during discussion, resulting in a discussion where students asked the questions, provided reasoned responses, and challenged each other's ideas, all while continuing to talk about, around, and with the text.

Another common instructional strategy for navigating this tension is the use of *back pocket questions* (i.e., questions focused on the central content or common misconceptions). Writing two to three back pocket questions prior to the discussion allows teachers to consolidate their thinking regarding the content goals of the discussion. These questions can then be used by the teacher as a mechanism to pull students' attention back to the most important aspects of the text if the need arises. In Transcript #3, Ms. Legere is not observed asking any questions, but she had back pocket questions at her disposal if students' talk strayed too far from the text or superficially engaged a particularly important aspect of the text.

Tempering Teaching in the Face of Student Struggle

By definition, the act of teaching involves showing or explaining (Bruner, 1966). As such, sitting and quietly listening to students struggle to understand a text or content during a discussion is inherently difficult for most teachers. We have found that teachers feel compelled to intervene when students' vocalizations indicate, even for a brief period, a lack of understanding during a discussion. Indeed, there is a tension inherent in tempering one's desire to explicitly intervene in the face of student struggle. Although the form of the intervention may vary from a detailed explanation of a text or full lecture on the topic to a series of test questions meant to establish basic understanding, all forms of instruction are intended to help students understand and reduce their struggle. The challenge in such a dynamic is that when teachers take over discussions to instruct or explain, it can serve as an indicator to students that they no longer control the discussion or hold interpretive authority (Mayer, 2009). Moreover, it diminishes opportunities for students to co-construct understanding (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995). It takes time to develop the tolerance to allow students the room to embrace their own struggle and grow within it, particularly when they are used to looking to the teacher for an answer. Teachers must develop ways to navigate these situations without reclaiming control of the discussions.

As a case in point, during week 8 of QT, Ms. Legere and her students discussed the text, *The Fabulous Perpetual Motion Machine*, about a group of students who attempted to build a perpetual motion machine for their upcoming school science fair. The machine fails in spectacular fashion, stealing energy from the next-door neighbors rather than generating energy itself. During Ms. Legere's next coaching session, she recalled that she was unsure of what to do when it was clear that her students did not understand that the machine in the story did not work as the characters intended. Ms. Legere said that she instinctively stepped in to explain the text and realized too late that by reverting to test questions, she took away an opportunity for students to co-construct understanding. That said, watching students struggle felt incongruent with her teacher identity.

Together, we worked through strategies that Ms. Legere could use that would support the students' basic understanding of the text, and allow them to hold interpretive authority. For instance, rather than relying on leading questions in future discussions, Ms. Legere used teacher moves to prompt students for reasons and evidence to support their thinking, challenged students' arguments by pushing them to reconsider their point of view, and modeled uptake questions as a way of opening the dialogic floor for alternative thinking. These tools enabled Ms. Legere to temper her need to instruct yet still provide support for students as they worked to co-construct understandings about difficult texts or content.

Time as Precious, Nonrenewable Resource

Time is an extremely limited resource in elementary language arts classrooms, particularly in cases where the school district is implementing a basal curriculum. In essence, every minute of the language arts time is accounted for by the activities of the basal reading series. Necessarily, time becomes a precious, non-renewable resource in classrooms, and teachers are reluctant to devote time to activities like small-group discussion. Minute for minute, an *IRE* dialogic model allows teachers to canvas student understanding in a fairly quick fashion. By contrast, enacting the QT discussion model takes relatively more time. During a typical week of QT, a substantive amount of class time is spent on activities that bolster students' ability to engage in productive talk as well as the discussions themselves. As seen in Figure 6, these activities include delivering lessons about QT discourse elements, employing pre-discussion activities that focus the students' text-based engagement on key ideas, important vocabulary, asking valuable questions, and administering post-discussion writing exercises that further cement students' understanding of the text.

Across Ms. Legere's implementation of QT, we found that she devoted ample time for all these components of QT in her classroom. Her commitment to implementing QT with a high degree of fidelity was vital to changing the dialogic culture of the classroom. Over years of working with teachers and their students, we have found that the discomfort caused by shifting the roles of the teacher and students during classroom discourse tends to dissipate after students have engaged in about 10 discussions (Murphy & Firetto, 2018). At this point, teachers have grown more comfortable with releasing responsibility for the flow of the discussion to the students and teachers are more confident in their ability to facilitate the talk without reclaiming control. Students have begun to master asking questions, supporting their claims with reasons and evidence, and responding to each other's ideas. In other words, they have begun to internalize the ways of thinking critically and analytically that make Quality Talk a powerful discussion approach. Transcript #3 from Ms. Legere's class reflects the discourse at week 17. We see that she is no longer asking the questions and that students are comfortable holding interpretive authority as they justify their thinking and challenge the explanations provided by their peers.

Rooted in successful outcomes like Ms. Legere and her class, during both the initial and ongoing professional development, we work with teachers to discern the best ways to integrate QT into their classroom while meeting their curricular expectations. For example, within QT, we have integrated many aspects of language arts curriculum including vocabulary, main idea and supporting details, comprehension strategies, oral fluency, critical thinking and reasoning, and scaffolded writing instruction. What teachers come to understand is that while QT takes time to implement, it also serves to bolster students' ability to think critically and analytically about what they read and to make reasoned decisions as a result of reading. No doubt such skills and abilities are fundamental to literacy in this era.

CODA

In this article, we described how Quality Talk can be implemented in ways that promote a shift from a teacher-controlled to a student-centered dialogic classroom culture. To do so, we overviewed the QT model with particular attention to the instructional frame, key discourse moves, teacher scaffolding, and underlying pedagogical

Figure 6
A Typical Week in Quality Talk

Note. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

principles. We also elaborated on some challenging dynamics that arise when dialogic classroom cultures are transitioning. As we close this article, we want to emphasize some aspects of talk that have received little theoretical or empirical attention in the extant literature on classroom discussions about text—aspects of talk that we feel are of particular importance to discourse-intensive pedagogy. Specifically, we feel strongly that teachers and researchers invested in using discussion as a pedagogical tool for enhancing learning from text and content must begin to attend to the ways in which those discussions are equitable and inclusive.

Although we feel confident that some teachers and researchers attend to issues of equity and inclusion in their teaching and research, it is our position that the complex role that identity plays in how teachers and students interact with each other as well as how they interact with text must be "centered" in our understandings of dialogic classroom culture. As DeCuir-Gunby and colleagues (e.g., DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014) have so eloquently articulated, it is not enough to "see" student differences or report demographic variables in our studies. Rather, we bear an onus to improve our intersectional competence (Boveda, 2016). Boveda and Aronson (2019) used the construct of *intersectional competence* to refer to "educators' awareness of how sociocultural markers of difference simultaneously intersect within the P-12 school context" (p. 248). Such markers of difference upon which individuals are often minoritized include race, ethnicity, gender identity, language, age, socioeconomic status, dis/ability, religion, sexuality, or nationality. Rooted in the pioneering work of individuals like Crenshaw (1989), Collins (1990), and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) as well as recent research by Boveda (2016), we know that many of these minoritizing categories overlap in school contexts. Importantly, we also know that teachers and students who identify as having sociocultural markers of difference are more likely to be marginalized, excluded, and disenfranchised in schools (U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, 2006). As such, we are calling on those invested in text-based discussion to begin to re-imagine what they do through a lens that places race, ethnicity, gender, etc., and their intersectional nature at the center of their discussion practice and research (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014).

In her transactional theory of reading, Rosenblatt (1978) highlights the importance of readers' interactions with text. Specifically, readers live through the text during the act of reading and create meaning grounded in their emotional responses to the characters' experiences. For example, readers can take a magical adventure with Harry, Ron, and Hermione while reading *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Rowling, 1999) or experience the fear felt by passengers on the R.M.S. Titanic as it sank, and the water grew colder and the night sky darker. As Rosenblatt explains, it is through the reader's continual transactions with text that meaning making is enabled. The transactional view of reading embraces the diversity of each reader's prior experiences, understandings, and identities as well as their necessarily unique interactions. In turn, small-group discussions become vibrant spaces for learning by providing a forum for students' distinctive meanings to mingle and be explored. Of course, teachers also have intersectional identities—identities that affect their own transactions with text and their subsequent meaning making.

Given that small-group discussions provide opportunities for diversity of meaning to be shared and examined, it is our perspective that they also serve as spaces for fostering equity and inclusion. By equity, we are referring to the recognition that access to opportunities are not the same for all individuals (Kendi, 2019). Individuals with minoritized identities have been historically excluded from many opportunities and being equitable means recognizing, acknowledging, and working to correct this exclusion in our practices and policies. Not surprisingly, basal readers provide ample opportunity to raise questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion or belonging. As a case in point, further reflection upon the discussion excerpted in Transcript #2 reveals a missed opportunity for Ms. Legere to elicit students' thinking about, around, and with the experiences of individuals brought from China to work on the U.S. railroads in the 1800s. As a research team, we now recognize how we might have used our time during ongoing coaching to help Ms. Legere build awareness of encouraging talk about the identities of the workers who were being marginalized and excluded. It would have been opportune to construct back pocket questions about the perspectives of the workers in the story, and perhaps, reorient the discussion about money by having students think about opportunities that White men received to earn money.

We have begun to emphasize the importance of equity and inclusion within the dialogic culture of a classroom in our own work with teachers, with the acknowledgment that failing to center these issues perpetuates systems of oppression. We are also encouraging teachers and other researchers to embrace the diversity that they and their students bring to discussions and discussion research (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In the end, the Quality Talk discussion approach provides the pedagogical tools, but as Ms. S., our third-grade teacher suggested, the process of changing the norms of classroom

talk remains in the hands of teachers and students. The first step in the process is to seize one of the many opportunities to build a new dialogic classroom culture.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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