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Analyzing Young Readers' Empathetic Responses to a Mexican American
Historical Narrative

Yvette Rivera

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Blair Earl Bateman, Chair
Alaska Black
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ABSTRACT

Analyzing Young Readers' Empathetic Responses to a Mexican American Historical Narrative

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Master of Arts

Empathy and cultural understanding of groups that are marginalized due to religious, ethnic or sexual background is essential for peace in schools, neighborhoods, and society at large. Literacy classrooms can be a safe environment in which students can develop their own understandings and empathies. Although worthwhile, much of the research lacks details of student reactions to the people and cultures read about in historical narratives, as well as a focus on pedagogical practices that could give students a deep understanding of the culture. This study analyzed the empathetic responses of 13 sixth grade students to themes presented in a Mexican American narrative text, *The Circuit*. The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of student empathy and how empathetic responses reflect a rich historical and visual context. Key data sources of this interpretive study included large group discussions, small group discussions, written journal responses, and interviews. The results of this study indicated that students' empathetic responses are varied and complex and seem to reflect familiarity with topics in the text and personal background. Minimizing the cognitive demand of cultural content seemed to be a key pedagogical factor in helping students reach deeper levels of empathy. Suggestions are given for educators looking to teach empathy through cultural texts. Possible areas of research are recommended.

Keywords: authentic text, *The Circuit*, cultural understanding, empathy, Francisco Jiménez, historical narrative, interpretive study, interview, journal reflection, literature circles, migrant farm workers, multicultural literacy, qualitative study, visual literacy

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Cultural understanding of individuals or groups of people that are defined by religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity has been an ongoing theme in both the political realm as well as in more personal interactions. In the history of the United States, the misunderstanding of marginalized groups has been the basis of war, segregation, persecution, and other smaller scale incidents and crimes. Whereas society seems to be far removed from such cultural conflicts when they are presented in history textbooks, the consequences of such misunderstandings reach the local level in schools and neighborhoods.

On November 14, 2016 the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported an overall increase in hate crimes against Muslim Americans as well as other groups noting 5,818 of hate crimes occurring in 2015. Specific crimes included “assaults, bombings, threats, and property destruction against minorities, women, gays and others” (Lichtblau, 2016). In the aftermath of a politically charged election in the United States of America in November of 2016, elementary and high schools experienced a rise in racial slurs and bullying, ranging from anti-Muslim comments to burning a flag representing homosexual relationships. Fifth graders were also heard chanting anti-Hispanic remarks in Southern California (Neuhauser, 2016). In protest of a city park about to remove the statue of Confederate Robert E. Lee, white nationalists marched alongside Klu Klux Klan members and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 12, 2017. They carried Nazi flags in overt racism as part of their march (Gray, 2017).

Although there is no simple solution to the rifts and misunderstandings among different groups of people, a correct knowledge of the circumstances and history of a marginalized people can help individuals draw conclusions and opinions based on accurate information. The antithesis of cultural misunderstanding is understanding and empathy. Empathy is defined as the human

capacity to attribute mental states to other people (Nikolajeva, 2012). The need to understand others who may have differing religious or cultural ideals is essential for peace in schools, neighborhoods, and society at large. In order to build empathy and understanding in children and youth, they must be given the opportunity to learn about the history, beliefs, and circumstances of groups of people that appear to be different from them. One way that educators and school administrators can promote understanding of other cultural groups is to implement the use of literature and culturally authentic texts that represent the experiences and realities of these particular groups. Culturally authentic texts project the identity, feelings, and reality of a cultural group to the reader. These texts go beyond providing accurate facts. (Alamillo & Arenas, 2012). Using culturally authentic literature that depicts history and real sentiments of a people in the classroom can promote an environment for students to make emotional connections to people of marginalized groups. And educators must allow students to reflect on the ideals, reasons, purposes, feelings, and beliefs of the specific cultural group being studied. Educators can create a safe place to explore and form their own opinions, understandings, and empathies.

This thesis reports on a study examining middle school students' empathetic responses to themes presented within an authentic cultural and historical context by teaching literacy and history through a Mexican American narrative text. Students learned about Mexican immigration by reading a semi-autobiographical narrative and studying the social, historical, and economic context of the narrative. A key component to maintaining the authenticity of the text was the use of visual aids, infographics, videos, historical photos, and the audio book of *The Circuit*. In this interpretive study, students' journal responses, discussions, and reactions were recorded in order to understand the nature of empathy in peer discussions and individual written reflections.

Outline of Thesis

The remainder of this thesis will consist of four more chapters. In Chapter 2 the review of the literature will be presented. Chapter 3 will describe the participants, the design of the study, and the methods used to carry out the study. The findings will be described in Chapter 4 and in Chapter 5 there will be an interpretation of the results along with the pedagogical implications.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature provides a forum of rich human experiences in which students can make connections. Literature allows students to be immersed in a world of experiences that are not part of their reality or draw upon solutions for experiences they have gone through. A serious study of children's literature indeed matters: it ignites imagination, creativity, and engagement with the world (Brown, 2017). Students get to know characters and see how they respond to tragedy and heartache. Pediatricians, educators, and clinicians endorse the use of children's literature when confronted with death since it provides a social context for coping with death (Gutierrez, Miller, Rosengren, & Schein, 2014; Wiseman, 2013). Literature creates windows into the lives of others along with solutions and coping strategies. Using cultural folk tales and other cultural texts helps bridge the cultural gaps between teachers and students. Understanding students' funds of knowledge allows teachers to reach their students on a personal level (Nathenson-Mejia & Escamilla, 2003). Furthermore, the careful selection of culturally authentic books by educators allows students to make connections with a variety of people and places around the globe. Careful book selection also allows students to appreciate differences between people, learn about diverse physical environments, and see life's hardships (Ernst & McCourt, 2004). As an overarching theme, researchers make strong arguments for "the power of literary texts to enhance readers' humanity" (Pereira & Campos, 2014, p. 359).

Empathy

Humanity entails empathizing with others. With reference to reading, empathy is just as much affective and emotional in nature as it is cognitive. Empathy involves both an emotional reaction and a mental process (Junker & Jacquemin, 2017; Pereira & Campos, 2014). Studies have focused on the use of books to teach empathy in a general sense (Cress & Holm, 2000;

Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Irvin, 2012). Irvin (2012) concluded that reading allows children to explore the characters' "motives, morals, values and philosophies" (p. 58). Nussbaum (1995) adds that a literary imagination allows students to feel deep compassion. Reading and empathy seem to be linked in part because readers are often removed enough from the situation so as to think about the others' circumstances and situation, opening up some space for empathy (Nussbaum, 1995).

A variety of studies provide general insight into the links between empathy and specific book genres. Cress and Holm (2000) found connections between social competence and empathetic responses through the use of realistic books. Likewise, Rycik and Rosler (2004) as cited in McTigue, Thornton, and Wiese (2013), claim that perspective taking is made easier with historical fiction. Studies that have taken into account history and literature identified students' abilities to form ethical conclusions about historical events (Cottingham, 2005). We know that historical and realistic fiction can help students arrive at empathetic responses and that text selection definitely influences critical discussions about social issues (Moller, 2012). McTigue, Thornton, and Wiese concluded that emotional connections with characters of historical fiction facilitate comprehension.

Researchers have given us details about the types of empathy that students can develop during the course of a literature class. Yilmaz (2007) has labeled empathy or historical imagination as one's ability to see and judge the past based on its context as opposed to current values. It also entails understanding the mentality, beliefs and intentions of those historical individuals or characters. It can sometimes be characterized as perspective taking (Barton, 1996 as cited in Yilmaz, 2007). In a study using a Chinese novella, Louie (2005) aimed to understand the nature of empathy when students were taught the political, social and cultural context of the

text. In her study, Louie used the context as a means to draw out empathetic responses. As part of historical empathy, readers were able to “reconstruct the attitudes, feelings, and actions of an individual who lived” during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Louie, p. 571). Other results of Louie’s study were students’ display of cognitive empathy (individuals were able to understand others’ situations and verbally express reasons for specific cultural practices), reactive emotional empathy (readers were able to react to other’s emotional responses), and cross-cultural empathy (learners were able to remove themselves from their beliefs in order to explain others’ way of thinking). Louie’s study provides a strong basis for understanding the intricacies of empathy.

Visual Literacy

When considering the context of a narrative text and its connection to empathy, visual literacy is key. Visual aids (whether in print or through technology) help form the rich context from which learners will base their ideas. Visual literacy is defined as “a set of skills that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media” (Lundy & Stephens, 2015, p. 1058). As such, visual literacy is closely connected to the study of history, social studies and literature as students are presented with a myriad of visual tools to aid in their understanding. Possible visual aids included videos, infographics, advertisements, authentic photographs of the time period, political propaganda, Power Point presentations, informative websites, picture books, historical documents, and anything else that provides information in a visual format. Infographics provide precise and clear visual representation of an instructional message and promote critical thinking and processing (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2016).

A few studies have attempted to find links between empathy and the visual context of the historical narrative (Fallace, Biscoe, & Perry, 2007; Louie, 2005; Taliaferro, 2009). Much of the

research involving visual literacy has proven that visual tools invite critical thinking and eliminate misconceptions (Cavanaugh, 2005; Lindquist, 2012; Morales Peña, 2010; Padurano, 2005). Morales Peña (2011) has studied the impact that visual tools have on students when forming new values and opinions as well as evaluating previous notions. Studies have also proven that visual representations promote discussions of controversial social topics (Lundy & Stephens, 2015; Serafina & Ladd, 2008) and aid students in making inferences (Norman, 2010). Researchers have recognized the impact of visual representations to create affective responses (Hassett & Schieble, 2007; O'Neil, 2011). Researchers who have studied visual images in connection with historical content have realized that learning with such images requires explicit training from teachers (O'Neil, 2011; Prior, Wilson, & Martinez, 2012). Attention to historical fiction has primarily been given to comprehension (Brown & Swope, 2010; Youngs, 2012.). Bersh (2013) has specifically studied the implementation of thematic units using picture books that provide a variety of perspectives on immigration and other cultural topics. Although these studies provide evidence for the many benefits of using visual tools in connection with reading, much of the focus has been on the visual and technical elements as opposed to empathic development.

When picture books and empathy have been studied in relation to one another, results have been general with little depth to the nature of empathy. References are made as to how the reader perceives the characters and conclusions have been made about the role of picture books in the start of emotional intelligence (Nikolajeva, 2013). Nikolajeva (2012) used picture books to observe student recognition of facial expressions and learned that the visual display of emotion gives students clear indications of characters' feelings. Taliaferro (2009) created a

visual context about African culture using picture books and found that knowing the context of characters' lives encouraged meaningful discussions and questions.

In contrast, studies that have attended to the depth of empathy have generally not taken into account visual empathy. Berlin (2012), for example, emphasized the link between empathy and deeply knowing the characters of a text including the circumstances and details of their lives. Both the context and empathy were taken into account in Berlin's study, but with no attention to visual tools, aids, or information.

Literature Circles

Discussion is an essential part of helping students in their development of empathy because it allows them to form human connections with peers and collaboratively engage in conversations about the context of the text being studied. Literature circles are discussions led by a small group of students reading the same text selected by the students themselves. The focus of the literature circle is the text selection rather than the students' ability levels (McCall, 2010). The discussion strategies used in literature circles can vary from clearly-defined roles for each student to less structured group conversations (McCall, 2010; Young, 2014.). Recent technologies and social media capabilities also allow for a new type of literature discussion that is conducted digitally on social media websites such as Facebook (Stewart, 2009).

Much of the research regarding literature circles has been based on the social cultural approach to learning developed by Lev Vygotsky, mainly that children's learning stems primarily from their social interactions (McLeod, 2014). It is well known that dialogue promotes listening and appreciation of multiple perspectives (Worthy, Chamberlain, Peterson, Sharp, & Shih, 2012) and that questioning in Socratic circles and spontaneous unplanned discussions are effective in encouraging sharing of ideas (Styslinger & Pollock, 2010; Young, 2014). Open-

ended questions provided the richest discussions of feelings and opinions in a study conducted by Chiaravalloti (2010). Researchers have proven that implementation of literature circles in a classroom creates an environment for learners to critically respond to texts, analyze ideas, and view multiple perspectives (Sanacore, 2013). Gilles (2010) has found that such literature discussions allow learners to challenge each other's ideas as well as build on conclusions made by others in the process.

Research has focused on how literature circles can be a learning community as well as how to train students in forming that community (Chiaravalloti, 2010). Maurer (2010) found that these circles lead to a community of learners that form social bonds with one another because of the consistency in communication. The same study concluded that literature circles tend to create meaningful interactions. Students develop trust in a cooperative setting when they participate in literature circles (Batchelor, 2012; Flint, 2010).

Written Reflections

Some studies have suggested that written reflections can help students develop empathy. Koopman and Hakemulder (2015) found that giving students time to reflect allows them to make moral evaluations, which could be a factor in understanding students' empathetic responses to their readings. As part of the research regarding journal responses and empathy, Koopman and Hakemulder concluded that stillness or thinking time lends itself to narrative empathy. Nussbaum (1995) lists journals, quotations, discussions, graphic organizers, and literature circles as ways to teach character education. Burns (2009) conducted a qualitative study in which students were in touch with the reality of war and responded in empathetic ways to those experiencing war. In keeping a response journal, students were able to make connections with the themes studied in the text.

Conclusion

The research about empathy and literature in young readers is rich and extensive. It is clear that using cultural texts in literature and history classes creates an optimal environment for viewing characters and people in a different light. Using realistic books, books that depict emotion visually, and books connected by theme or topic seems to help students get a better sense of the characters so as to recognize others' feelings and motives. Although worthwhile, much of the research deals with reading and empathy in a very general sense. The type of empathy is described in general terms with little depth to the nature of how young readers respond to, develop, or describe in detail their empathy. Furthermore, there is little detail about the nature of such empathy in connection with historical narratives that portray different cultural groups.

Creating a context when related to history books has also been found to create depth of understanding from the students' point of view; however, recent studies have failed to emphasize the visual context of a text in understanding the nature of empathy. More research is needed on how creating a visual historical or social context influences the empathy of young readers. A rich background within a visual context coupled with cultural texts can allow researchers to document how students respond to people and events that are part of real history. If we can understand how creating the visual context of a book is connected to empathy in young readers, we can get some meaningful information of how to best create an environment where such empathy can be fostered.

Empathy has also been studied in student discussions. Researchers can confidently affirm that literature circles provide opportunities to view other perspectives, discuss critical topics, analyze, practice listening, and share opinions, but they have not drawn any compelling

conclusions about how these skills relate to empathy. No connections have been made between the community within learners and the empathy towards characters in the texts that are read. Observations on student interactions and assigned readings should be studied if we are to find links between building a community and building empathy. The detailed descriptions of students' responses to a historical context both verbally and in writing, will provide valuable information about the nature of empathy as it relates to historical narratives.

If we have detailed descriptions of young readers' empathy, the descriptions can serve as models for educators as they strive to develop that empathy in their students. If we can clarify the role that literature circles have in developing empathy in young readers, perhaps educators could apply such techniques in their literature curriculum to build student character traits such as empathy. The implications of such understandings can have long-term effects on children and schools. If young learners can make deep connections with those historically realistic people in a book, perhaps those connections can be transferred to their real lives and schools. If the nature of empathy coupled with the study of the historical context of a book is deep and lasting, then these are some strategies to be implemented by schools. If we can tap into how young learners empathize with those of other cultural groups then such details can be a powerful motivator for implementing the use of authentic literature to build bridges between people.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The present study was designed in order to investigate sixth graders' responses to a Mexican American historical narrative when reading the text within a rich visual and historical context. The study was designed to gather detailed information about the nature of students' empathetic responses. A historical narrative was selected because I thought history in narrative form would be more engaging for students than a historical textbook or newspaper. Since research has shown that historical narratives encourage perspective taking, the genre and topic of the text were a good fit.

It was important for me to gather data in students' natural surroundings and context. A large part of the data collection came from the recording of literature group discussions because I wanted to capture conversations that occurred naturally with peers as opposed to interactions with an authority figure such as the researcher or teacher. Journal reflections gave students the freedom of expressing ideas that might have otherwise been inhibited because of peers or adult presence. Interviews with the students allowed me to ask more probing questions about feelings and attitudes that had been mentioned without teacher or researcher influence previously.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of students' empathetic responses to a Mexican American narrative text when studied within its historical, social, and political context?
2. How do students' empathetic responses reflect information conveyed through the use of visual aids and current technologies in pre-reading activities?
3. How do students' empathetic responses reflect discussion of literal information and background knowledge done in pre-reading and post-reading activities?

Participants and Classroom Context

I selected a convenience sample from a K-6 elementary school located in a rapidly growing city of Utah. I selected this school because the principal encouraged research at the school and was enthusiastic about me teaching authentic cultural literature. The classroom teacher was invested in teaching cultural themes to her sixth graders so that factor played a major role in selecting her classroom as part of the study. The rapid growth of the city is due to a number of technology and commercial based businesses. With a population of 54,382, it had nearly doubled in size since the year 2000. The population consisted of 87.6% Caucasians and 7.7% Hispanics with the remaining 1.6% being mixed ethnicities, 1.4% Asian, 0.8% Pacific Islander, 0.4% Native American and 0.2% African American. The median household income of families in the city in 2015 was \$72,894 with a median age of 23.9. 28.6% of the population had earned a bachelor's degree and 9.4% had earned a graduate degree. 22.9% of the population had earned a high school diploma or less (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

Consistent with the city demographics, the main racial group at the school was Caucasian. Of 897 students at the school, 815 were Caucasian, 36 were Hispanic, and 34 were of multiple races. At the time of the study, there was one Pacific Islander enrolled at the school and two Native American students, one Asian student and eight Black students. Of the students enrolled, 11.4% were economically disadvantaged. Of the 34 teachers at the school, five had graduate degrees and all 34 of them were licensed teachers.

A former co-worker of mine expressed interest in my study involving Mexican American literature, so we began discussing the possibilities of how it could be carried out in her classroom. Ms. Hunt's (pseudonym) goals to teach empathy and understanding towards other cultures aligned with my goals for promoting understanding of various cultural groups so we

made a decision to move forward with the study. Ms. Hunt's teaching practices had included the use of literature to teach history and critical discussions about current events. She had organized to have Muslim guest speakers as part of the social studies curriculum to promote cultural and religious tolerance. At the time of the study, Ms. Hunt had eight years of teaching experience including teaching all core subjects to sixth graders and teaching computer literacy in first through sixth grades.

After receiving approval from the school district, I went to Ms. Hunt's classroom to present the study to the students. I explained to students that they would read a book about immigration to the US as well as discuss the topic with peers and record their insights. Students were given a choice of whether or not to participate in the study and then given the appropriate student and parent consent forms.

The sample in this study consisted of 12 Caucasian native English speakers and one Hispanic English Language Learner (ELL). The sample consisted of nine boys and four girls. Of the 13 participating students, four were below grade level in literacy including reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing. Two students were above grade level in literacy, and the remaining seven students were at grade level in literacy (see Table 1). Students' family backgrounds and extracurricular interests varied.

Table 1 <i>Student Characteristics</i>	
Pseudonym	Literacy level and characteristics
Brooklyn	Above grade level. Creative and artistic as well as quiet and reserved. Blended family dynamics.
Maria	Above grade level. Social and popular girl with most friends in other classes. Interested in dance.
Claire	At grade level. She is the youngest of several older siblings. Extracurricular activities include music and sports. Has a close Hispanic friend.
Cole	At grade level. Has strong family relationships. Struggles with attention deficit and using socially appropriate behaviors. Outspoken.
Landon	At grade level. Very studious and knowledgeable in a wide range of topics. He loves to read. Very confident in academics.
Logan	At grade level. Reserved except with close friends. Loves soccer. Perfectionist.
Mya	At grade level. Suffers from a childhood illness and has volunteered at the hospital helping patients.
Sean	At grade level. Enjoys soccer. Had a difficult time making new friends after changing schools. Avid reader. High quality school work.
Seth	At grade level. Plays sports on a team with Hispanic boys. Responsible older sibling.
Evan	Below grade level. Quiet with a few close friends. Chatty when discussing topics of high interest or social content.
Lucas	Below grade level. Comes from a hardworking family. Extroverted and outspoken.
Noah	Below grade level. Helpful and respectful. Enjoys sports. Experience caring for animals on a farm.
Richard	Below grade level. English language learner with limited abilities. New to school in fifth grade. Enjoys soccer and loves animals. Lost a pet who froze to death.

The class as a whole had attended special guest lectures about the Muslim religion in connection with the social studies curriculum on world religions. The class had also read *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen, a historical fiction text about the concentration camps in World War II, as part of the literacy unit right before this study. Ms. Hunt's class was unique in that she implemented ways of helping her students be understanding towards others by the text

selections she made and in her daily interactions with students. She made sure to clarify when students might question cultural stereotypes or make stereotypical comments. She also promoted empathy amongst the students, particularly when students had something that made them stand out such as a health condition or learning disability. When Ms. Hunt and I discussed the possibility of teaching this unit in her classroom, as a researcher I had to evaluate whether or not she would be a good fit. I knew I needed an educator who understood the purpose of being inclusive and empathetic towards populations that might be considered different. The study entailed looking at the main characters and talking about immigration and other sociopolitical issues. Ms. Hunt's personality and viewpoints were key in helping me carry out the study to delve more into this topic about empathy.

Implementation of the Lessons

I planned the lessons and created the visual resources for each chapter of the unit using technological tools or gathered existing photos or images from the internet. I selected all visual images, videos, and supplemental reading materials and picture books. I researched immigration laws, the history of fieldworkers in the United States, the crops picked in the United States, the life of Francisco Jiménez, the dangers faced by farmworkers, and Catholic religious beliefs. I carried out all pre-reading discussions and lessons with the students with occasional comments made by Ms. Hunt.

The literacy class was part of an extended day schedule in which literacy instruction took place at the beginning of the day. This study only involved observations and data collection gathered during literacy instruction time over the course of four weeks Monday through Friday, 60 minutes each day. Ms. Hunt managed behavior and assigned students to their literature

circles. She clarified instructions and protocol during reading time, discussion time, and journal response time.

Sources of Information

Field Notes

Before each chapter of the book, I led the class in a large group discussion where I presented the background information of the book using Power Point presentations, videos, visual aids, authentic photos, authentic documents, picture books, infographics, maps, and key words in English and Spanish that students would encounter in each chapter. All visual information presented was directly related to migrant farm workers and Mexican immigration to the United States. I used picture books containing parts or chapters of *The Circuit* as well as personal photos of my parents, their green cards, and their citizenship documents. Visual aids in the form of photos were gathered from Pixabay.com and historical websites. I asked questions and took notes of students' questions and responses. Students then read the chapter of the book in literature circles according to the teacher's group assignments based mainly on student dynamics and varying abilities. The literature circles varied depending on the teacher's preferences. While students read, I took notes if students made comments or asked questions, but they were so focused on reading that the responses usually didn't come until after they were done reading. I also looked through my notes after each large group discussion to observe any particular patterns.

Audio Recordings

Once students were done reading the chapter, I projected a series of questions onto the screen in the classroom (see Appendix A). Literal questions required a knowledge of facts from the book with little or no interpretation required. Critical thinking questions required students to

make connections and draw conclusions based on implied information. Interpretive questions required students to form opinions or take a side. The questions for the literature circles were adapted from *Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide: The Circuit* written by the Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAI) at the University of New Mexico. In the literature circles, students answered the questions orally while I made an audio recording of each conversation. Students were instructed to answer all the questions and to share any insightful thoughts they had during the course of the chapter. They were also instructed to be respectful of students who wished to not comment on any particular question. The literature circle discussions were recorded for every chapter. I also wrote down notes and annotated student names of comments that I found particularly interesting as students answered questions so that I could find the information easily when going through the data. The interviews were also recorded to be used for future reference and analysis.

Journal Entries

After students had answered the questions and made verbal responses to the chapter, students answered a series of questions that required written responses. The journal prompts were adapted from the questions provided by the *Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide: The Circuit* (see Appendix B). The prompts asked students more open-ended questions than the discussion questions and required interpretations and opinions. The questions were projected onto a screen in the classroom and students responded independently to the questions. Some of the journal response questions were similar to the discussion questions and some were different. Sometimes talking about the issues beforehand helps students formulate their thoughts in writing. Students recorded their responses in a college blue book typically used to administer final writing exams. Students were given 15-20 minutes to complete the questions.

Interviews

As I took field notes and observed students' reactions to the book, I was able to get a sense of some general perspectives. I selected four students to interview based on insightful comments I heard or read in their journal and on varying perspectives. Students were interviewed in the school library while I transcribed some comments on a Word document and recorded the interview. I also gathered data in personal interviews with Ms. Hunt. She provided detailed information about her students and some empathetic responses that she observed from her point of view. Ms. Hunt also provided more detailed information about some of the students in the class and their family or social backgrounds. The interviews were conducted on the last two days of the study after students had completed the book, all discussions, and all journal entries. See Appendix C for a list of questions asked during the interviews.

Data Analysis

I analyzed my data throughout the course of the study. My field notes included writing down the name of the chapter along with the specific visual tools I used to present that chapter or discussion. At the end of each lesson, I analyzed possible factors involved in the students' responses. After each large group discussion I reflected on the questions that I asked, the visuals I used and the responses in the literature circles to find connections. When I observed students making deep connections I annotated the student quotes. I also read through journal entries to get a sense of how students were responding to the text and to the visual context that had been used for that particular topic. I made notes of students who had written comments that were detailed in nature and made direct links to the context presented to know my possibilities for interviewing students at the end of the book. I listened to all audio recordings of student discussions over the course of weeks after the study had been completed; however, I did listen to excerpts

immediately after each discussion to note any significant observations about their reactions to the visual context. I reflected on possible themes that emerged in student conversations and in journal reflections, mainly looking for obvious connections to the social, political, cultural, and historical context that was being presented. I also kept a record of reflective field notes which mainly included a preliminary analysis of the students' responses and how they were influenced by what they saw in a video or in a Power Point presentation. After the study was completed I went through each of the data sources (field notes, audio recordings, journal entries, and interviews) and did a close reading or a thorough listening to extract the most meaningful quotes that connected to my research questions. I typed out my field notes and labeled them with the chapter and visual tools I used in that particular large group discussion. I also went back and looked at the visual aids I used including videos and websites to see the conclusions students were making. When I listened to the complete audio recordings of the literature circle discussions, I began to see layers and a wide range of categories to label my themes. I came up with general themes, but as I read through the journal entries I came across a wide variety of responses ranging from no empathy to empathy directly linked to something that was seen in class. My categories became more specific as I read through all the journal entries and listened to the interviews. I transcribed quotes that fit into the wide range of categories I was seeing. I used a data analysis program called Dedoose to visualize my categories and see overlapping patterns with the visual tools that I used in the study. I also color-coded the extracted quotes by chapter since the visual context I created was divided by chapters. Dedoose provided me with great visual graphs and cues to help me see relationships and overlapping themes. It also allowed me to tag excerpts by chapter which was essential in having me see the influence of each chapter's

visual context. The themes that resulted from my data analysis will be presented in Chapter 4, along with a discussion of their implications.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will describe the main types of responses made by students during the unit. Response types will be listed and defined. Student responses to *The Circuit* by chapter and data source will be reported. Although there were numerous responses within each data source, I only selected samples of responses that show differing perspectives. Journal responses within students often showed similar reactions when linked to empathy. I included those similar responses because it showed a trend in responses. I will also highlight the key interactions used by students in the literature circles (see Table 4). Then, I will summarize the pre-reading discussion, literature circle, and journal responses. Finally, an in depth profile of the students interviewed will follow.

Types of Responses

Literal or Factual Responses

Students responded to discussion questions and written prompts with factual information depending on the type of question they were asked. Sometimes students' responses to questions were apathetic or stereotypical in nature (see Table 2). Literal responses were found primarily in pre-reading discussions and in literature circle discussions due to the nature of the study. The discussions were designed in part to check for understanding and solidify factual knowledge prior to answering questions about empathy. For the most part, students that were behind grade level in literacy responded to questions in very literal ways when personal interpretation was required.

Type	Description
Apathy	Makes indifferent or unconcerned statement.
Literal interpretation	Interprets words as stated in the text with no metaphor or underlying meaning.
Statement of facts only	Lists information with no interpretation.
Stereotypical information or misunderstanding	Presents an oversimplified idea about a person or idea OR student presents an idea founded on a confusion of facts.

Empathetic Responses

A range of responses that reflected a form of empathy were identified in literature circle discussions, journal entries and interviews. Although students did not always explicitly respond with empathy, students responded in ways that implied empathy or showed students being conscious of the feelings and situations of those in the text. This range of responses is shown in Table 3. I found that the types of responses varied slightly between the literature circle discussions and the journal entries and interviews. For this reason, I added a few response types to the literature circle responses as shown in the Table 4.

Type	Description
Empathy with a condition	States empathy under other circumstances or if a condition were met.
General expression of empathy	Uses the words such as "happy" or "sad" to express empathy.
Implied empathy	Expresses an emotional investment without explicitly stating emotions or empathetic language.
More descriptive empathy with adjectives	Uses words such as "very angry," "very sad," "depressing," or "ecstatic" to describe empathy.
Perspective taking	Perceives them self in the situation of others.
Challenge to a stereotype or misinformed perspective	Challenges stereotypical comments made by peers.
Statement of facts linked directly to empathy	Expresses empathy and uses factual evidence to support opinion.

Type	Description
Consciousness of own empathy, emotion or perspective	Verbally reflects or comments on empathetic emotions.
Perception of character's emotions	Comments on character's feelings without expressing empathy.
Empathy blocked due to lack of information or misinformation	Expresses an idea that is stereotypical or incorrect that is linked to a lack of empathy.

Critical Thinking Responses

During the course of the unit, I found that students made deep connections to the text in reference to the sociopolitical circumstances of the text or to their personal lives. These responses showed critical thinking (see Table 5). Although these statements would not fall under any of the categories reflecting empathy, these deep understandings could serve as a basis for developing empathy. For this reason I have included them in the results.

Type	Description
Deep interpretation of cultural aspects	Makes a deep connection to the text with regards to the social, political or economic context of the book.
Deep interpretation linked to a personal experience	Makes a deep connection to the text based on a personal experience.

Student Responses by Chapter of the Book

Chapter: “Under the Wire”

Pre-reading responses. This discussion included an introduction to immigration and the factors that lead Mexicans to immigrate to the United States. I used family photos and personal experiences to describe the journey people make from Mexico. Because this was the beginning of the unit, students responded to questions with stereotypical information as well as responses from peers who challenged those stereotypes. For example, one question, “What do you know about Mexicans?” resulted in the following dialogue:

Maria: Mexicans are fine. Their nachos are delicious! [*Stereotypical information*]

Claire: Nachos are NOT real Mexican [food]!” [*Challenge to a stereotype*]

At one point in the lesson, students were shown an image of a fingerprint with a Mexican flag embedded in the pattern of the print and were asked what it could mean. In some cases students offered a literal interpretation:

Noah: It can mean an illegal Mexican fingerprint. [*Literal interpretation*]

In other cases students offered information that suggested stereotypes or misunderstandings:

Noah: When they catch them at the border, their print has a Mexican flag.

Researcher: What about me? I’m a US citizen. If they took my prints at the border would they have a US flag?

Noah: No, it would be plain black. *[Stereotypical information or misunderstanding]*

One of the visuals I used literally showed the United States from the Mexican side of the US-Mexico border with some barbed wire and a view of the American flag on the US side. This image allowed students to take the perspective of Mexicans.

Lucas: You have to army crawl under the fences. *[Perspective taking]*.

Claire: They are at the wall. *[Perspective taking]*

Literature circle responses. After crossing the border, Francisco and his brother were given a brown bag with candies and fruit by a train conductor. As students discussed possible reasons for the gift, students responded with implied empathetic responses. Logan stated that the conductor gave Francisco and his brother food shortly after crossing the border because he felt bad for them. Logan’s response implied an underlying feeling of empathy for their hunger and circumstances of poverty. The key literature circle interactions for this chapter were sharing of similar ideas, asking questions, and clarification of information (see Table 3). Following is a verbatim transcription of the classroom discussion in response to the question “Why did the conductor leave the brown bag for the boys?”

Mya: To be nice. *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Lucas: To be nice and to realize they have been working hard. *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Mya: And maybe they are hungry. *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Evan: It’s kind of like a prize for them. *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Lucas: It’s a cool experience when someone gives you a piece of candy. *[Perspective taking]*

Evan: It was toys.

Logan: It wasn't toys. It's food just for them to survive because they can't pick strawberries yet. He feels bad for them and he wants that food for them to eat.

[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas/Clarification of information]

Evan: Do you think they bought it? *[Asking questions]*

Logan: He [the conductor] was being nice and gave it to them. *[Implied*

empathy/Sharing of similar ideas]

Table 6
<i>Literature Circle Interactions</i>
Asking a question
Clarification
Encouragement of discussion
Expression of similar emotion or opinion to that of a peer
Expression of opposing view or opinion to that of a peer
Perception of peer's emotion
Reference to peer's experience
Sharing of common/similar ideas or builds on idea of peer

Journal responses. Students easily took the perspective of Francisco given hypothetical circumstances in response to the writing prompt “Describe how you would feel if you and your family had to move to another country. How do you think Panchito and his family felt about leaving Mexico?” (In reporting students’ journal responses, I have maintained the original spelling as written by students.)

Logan: I would not want to move because of the different things: food, laws, and sickness their. I think that Panchito and his family felt happy and scared at the same time because they don't want to get caught by the border patrol and they want to get out of Mexico.

[Perspective taking]

Evan: I think Panchito felt good that they could get a job in America and when they got food from the conductor, I bet they felt really happy. I also think they felt a little worried because if they get caught they will have to go back to Mexico. *[Perspective taking]*

Lucas: If I had to move to a different country at that time I would be scared. And I would miss my friends. If I lived on a farm I would miss my animals. *[Perspective taking]*

Mya: I bet Panchito and his family were nervous about leaving Mexico and going into America because it's going to be a tense ride wondering if you'll be able to get past the border patrol. I also think they could have been excited to see a different country other than Mexico. *[Perspective taking]*

Chapter: "Soledad"

Literature circle responses. Students picked cotton out of its hard shell and picked the seeds out as a pre-reading activity for the chapter "Soledad." Francisco and his family picked cotton in this chapter.

Students perceived Francisco's emotions; however, Evan's lack of experience picking cotton for hours as a farm worker prevented him from being empathetic. His experience picking one boll of cotton was the information he had to base his opinion on. Following is a verbatim transcription of the small group discussion answering the prompt "Describe why picking cotton was so difficult and why Francisco was disappointed at the end of the day." In this brief interaction, both Maria and Logan shared similar ideas about Francisco's feelings.

Evan: The cotton poked him. It made him bleed, but it didn't when I was picking cotton. *[Empathy blocked due to lack of information]*

Maria: Panchito felt left out about not being able to pick cotton. *[Perception of character's emotions]*

Logan: He felt hurt, sad. He tried to make more money by putting dirt clods. [*Perception of character's emotions*]

Journal responses. Students responded to the prompt “What is the hardest job you have ever done? Compare your experience to Francisco’s. How was your experience the same or different from his?”

Maria responded with a statement of facts only:

Maria: I had to clean my messy basement that took 5 hours to clean. It was so hard because it was super messy. I felt good inside for getting the work done, but sometimes I got a little frustrated. I didn’t have work as long as Francisco, but I did work hard for a while kind of like Francisco. [*Statement of facts only*]

Francisco did more that watch his little brother in the chapter. Lucas was not able to respond with empathy because of misinformation:

Lucas: The hardest job I have ever done was cleaning a giant bathroom. It is hard because it is big and hard. I think my job is harder than Francisco’s because all he had to do was watch his brother. [*Stereotypical information or misinformation*]

Mya did not respond with empathy either; however, she did make a deep interpretation based on her personal experiences:

Mya: The hardest job I’ve ever done is probably making dog his meals. He has this sickness so I have to grind ups his food, add water, and mix it up with all these different medications. It stinks so badly and I get it on my hands sometimes. And this dog is supposed to be my service dog! Not the other way around! My experience with that job is probably different from Francisco’s because I don’t get paid and he does. And picking

cotton all day is probably harder than making my dog's food. *[Deep interpretation of personal experience]*

Chapter: "Inside Out"

Pre-reading responses. Students made predictions about the chapter as a whole group using *La Mariposa*, the digital picture book of "Inside Out." The picture book showed Francisco at school struggling with his studies and with bullies. The book also showed a class pet, a cocoon that emerged as a butterfly. Francisco drew a prize-winning butterfly in art class. Student responses were based solely on the pictures and key Spanish words that would appear in the chapter. The class didn't read the picture book.

Students made deep interpretations of the main events and of what the Spanish words could mean. In the book, Francisco was shown giving his prize winning drawing to one of the bullies after wrestling with one of them. The words *¡Qué sorpresa!* and *Es tuyo* were highlighted in large print. For example, the questions "What do you think is happening in the picture? What do you think *Qué sorpresa* means? and What do you think *Es tuyo* means?" resulted in the following dialogue:

Seth: He's different so they are probably making fun of him. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Claire: I think he's saying "good job!" *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Lucas: *Es tuyo* means friendship. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Literature circle responses. During the literature circle discussions for this chapter, students took the perspective of Francisco as he was learning English. Following is a verbatim transcription of students responding to the questions, "How would you feel if you went to a

school where nobody spoke English and you were scolded for speaking English?” and “Would you like school? Why or why not?” In the conversation, students shared similar emotions regarding the hypothetical situation of being scolded for speaking their own language and attitudes about school if English were forbidden.

Landon: I’d feel really sad. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Cole: I’d probably feel a bit upset. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Landon: Because I don’t know any of the language.

Seth: I’d feel annoyed. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Seth: I think I’d feel like kind of confused cause I didn’t know what they were saying and then I’d also feel like angry because *[Perspective taking/ Expression of similar emotion]*

Landon: Because you don’t know what they are saying.

Logan: I wouldn’t like school. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Cole: ‘Cause you don’t know what they’re saying and they’re gonna be punishing you.

[Perspective taking]

Seth: Yeah, you feel like everybody is pretty much against you. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Logan: You feel like everything against you. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Landon: Would you like school? I don’t like school in the first place.

Cole: Well, it would be definitely interesting because...

Seth: I would hate school even more because no one would understand me. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Cole: But you just wouldn't understand what the teacher is saying. There is a problem there because you know how Ms. Hunt tells us to grab the books? *[Perspective taking]*

In the following discussion, students put themselves in Francisco's situation and considered his transient life. Following is the verbatim transcription of students answering the questions "What do you think it would be like to start school in the middle of the school year?"

Cole: Probably 'cause you're gonna learn a lot more things in the middle of the year. At the beginning of the year you're going to be reviewing stuff.

Logan: At the beginning of the year you're getting to know people.

Seth: I know what it's like to start in the middle of the school year. *[Perspective taking]*

Cole: Yeah 'cause you came in the middle of the fourth grade school year didn't you?
[Reference to peer's experience]

Seth: I came in the middle fourth grade. When I was second...no, third grade I moved halfway into the year. And before that out halfway of the middle of the year. *[Perspective taking]*

Cole: Because they moved at a certain time of the year that's probably why they....

Seth and Cole also made deep interpretations connected to life circumstances of migrant farm workers who move frequently based on the location of crops and who often lack basic English skills. In the interaction below, students made reference to the experience of a peer, Seth.

Seth: You probably feel confused or whatever because you have to try to adjust or whatever to everything new. It's really just getting adapted to your new environment and like meeting some new people. I mean he got Arthur or whatever. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect/Perspective taking]*

Cole: He has Arthur as a friend that can help him translate English. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

The same group of students made deep interpretations comparing the cocoon and the butterfly to the cultural aspects of Francisco's life. Although students did not express empathy explicitly, students' ideas about the symbolism of the cocoon and the butterfly showed they were able to perceive the circumstances and emotions experienced by Francisco. The interaction of the students in the discussion below involved a sharing of similar ideas. The students shared a common mindset about the meaning of the butterfly and the cocoon. Following is a verbatim transcription of a small group discussing the questions "Why do you think Francisco becomes so attached to the butterfly? What do you think the butterfly could symbolize?"

Cole: Can I speak for a second? It's in the captivity of a cocoon and it feels isolated and alone, but then when the butterfly comes out it's free and they let it go. That's basically what Francisco feels, feels isolated and alone. *[Perception of character's emotions/Deep interpretation of cultural aspect/Sharing of common ideas]*

Logan: That's what I was going to say. The butterfly symbolizes being free. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Landon: Yeah, I like the theme free. Why I think he became attached to it is because...

Cole: He felt...

Cole and Landon: Yeah, felt the exact same thing.

Seth: At first he's like a slow caterpillar. He's in captivity. He's alone. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Cole: The jar is like the captivity.

Seth: And then the butterfly symbolizing he had like friends now, nobody was like...People were so against him then he made friends or whatever.

Journal responses. Student written responses to describe what the cocoon and butterfly could symbolize resulted in deep interpretations directly related to an aspect of culture as seen in the picture book and as read in the chapter. References were made to the ideas of learning a new language, moving to a new country, making friends in a new school, and success in the United States.

Cole: The cocoon probably is Francisco feeling isolated and alone. The butterfly could be him being free from being alone. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Seth: Him being trapped, alone, and afraid, him opening up to the world. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Maria: I know that cocoons are a soft silk that surrounds a caterpillar when it's turning into a butterfly. I also know that butterflies are caterpillars that were turned into a butterfly, that his life is changing. In the end of all the hard things he goes through. It will turn out beautiful in the end. *[Deep interpretations of cultural aspect]*

Mya: In Francisco's life, a butterfly to him is probably like his life right now. He has not very many friends and he is new to the country and English. So it's kinda like he has a soft barrier around him, ready to burst out and sprout into a beautiful butterfly and start a new life. For example, in his old life in Mexico, he was a caterpillar, when he got to America, he was in a cocoon, and he finally gets used to his new life in America, he is a butterfly. *[Deep interpretations of cultural aspect]*

Landon: The cocoons are related to Francisco's life like he was a cocoon in Mexico. When he came to U.S. he was a butterfly. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Evan: I think that the cocoon represents no freedom. I also think the butterfly represents his freedom and in a way friendship. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Chapter: “Miracle in Tent City”

Literature circle responses. Students took Francisco’s perspective when his brother was tragically ill. In their conversation, they made connections to the text with regards to the Catholic religion. Following is a verbatim transcription of students answering the question “What was the miracle in the chapter?”

Landon: At the very end it said it was a miracle he survived.

Cole: They prayed every day for a year. *[Statement of facts only]*

Seth: I could never do that. *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Landon: If I had that much devotion to get my baby brother. *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Seth: Then I could do it, but *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Students shared similar ideas about the meaning of the butterflies in Francisco’s religious dream in the discussion that follows. Maria and Landon had similar interpretations. Students made deep interpretations about Francisco’s religious beliefs when they responded to the question, “How are the butterflies related to Catholic religious beliefs we talked about?” The verbatim transcription of the discussion follows.

Landon: It’s a dream of religion or of faith. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Researcher: We talked about the *Virgen*. Do you remember Juan Diego saw the cloak of flowers?

Seth: I thought it was kind of weird. I'm guessing the reason he is aware of the butterflies because he had just taken care of one. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Maria: It was also a symbol of freedom and *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Landon: And sometimes a symbol of hope. Have hope. He'll be okay. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Journal responses. Students were asked to describe the spiritual experience Francisco had when his baby brother got sick. They responded by only stating facts. Following are the written responses to the prompts “Describe the experience Panchito had when he was praying,” and “How does Panchito’s experience relate to the information we learned about Catholicism?”

Maria: Torito would get better. I think this relates to Catholic beliefs because they pray to the holy child. In this experience, Panchito and his family pray to the hold child so that Torito may feel better. *[Statement of facts only]*

Seth: It relates because the cloths he was wearing are the same as the holly child. *[Statement of facts only]*

Chapter: “El Angel de Oro”

Literature circle responses. In this chapter, students were asked questions about the whereabouts of Francisco’s friend Miguelito who mysteriously disappeared on a day they had planned to go fishing. Francisco saw a beautiful goldfish in the neighbor’s home and a lot of small gray fish suffocating in muddy water. Several students perceived Francisco’s emotions. In the discussion that follows, Cole and Landon shared similar ideas about the symbolism of the fish. Following is the verbatim transcription of a small group discussion answering the question, “What do you think the goldfish and the dying gray fish could symbolize?”

Cole: The goldfish is alone like Francisco. [The gray fish] is his family and friends. *[Perception of character's emotions/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Cole: He feels separated like the goldfish. It even says in the chapter he feels for the goldfish. *[Perception of character's emotions/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Ms. Hunt: It says he feels like the fish?

Cole: Not exactly like that, but

Landon: It symbolizes his friends because his life just changed. *[Perception of character's emotions/Sharing of similar ideas]*

The students in another literature circle responded to questions about Miguelito's whereabouts. Logan perceived Francisco's emotions. One deep interpretation of cultural aspects was recorded. In the literature circle interaction that follows, Logan, Seth, and Cole expressed opposing views as to the whereabouts of Miguelito. Logan's view included the possibility of deportation by the border patrol. Logan presented a point of view that Seth had not considered. Following is the verbatim transcription of a small group discussing the questions, "Why do you think Francisco let his fishing rod float away?" and "What do you think happened to Miguelito?"

Logan: He might be sad that he didn't actually go fishing with him and he's gone so he floats it down the river. *[Perception of character's emotions]*

Seth: I think he died. *[Expression of opposing view]*

Logan: I think he moved away because his cabin was dark and empty. *[Expression of opposing view]*

Cole: They didn't say it was empty. They just said it was dark. *[Expression of opposing view]*

Seth: He died then.

Seth: I'm pretty sure he would tell his best friend-hey I'm movin'.

Logan: Well, it was probably unexpected because the border control. [*Expression of opposing view/Deep interpretation of cultural aspect*]

Logan: Goldfish represent good and new things that can happen. They're free and happy.

Logan: Dying gray fish, trapped, getting old. The fish are dead and sad.

Seth: The goldfish and the gray fish are best friends. How the goldfish and the grayfish are swimming around in the tank. It could symbolize his friend drowning in the lake.

He's floating around with some other fish. [*Expression of opposing view*]

Journal responses. Written responses for the chapter *Angel de Oro* were empathetic in nature. Following are the responses to the prompts "Why do you think Francisco lets the fishing rod float away?" and "How did you feel at the end of the chapter?" Two students responded with general expressions of empathy:

Richard: He lets it float away because his friend moved and him and his friend liked to fish. The gray fish was dieing because it was out of water. I felt sad because his friend moved away. [*General expression of empathy*]

Claire: Kind of sad for Francisco because his friend moved away. [*General expression of empathy*]

Following are the student responses to the questions, "What happened to the gray fish?" and "What could they symbolize?" Two students responded with deep interpretations of cultural aspects:

Landon: I think that the grey fish symbolize all the immigrants coming to America from Mexico and they are trying to survive but can't, and the goldfish is what they want to be.

[Deep interpretations of cultural aspects]

Maria: I think the little gray fish could symbolize his life like with all the hard things he's been through. And that everything would soon get better. I felt bad since his friend was in his cabin/tent. I don't think Panchito felt happy that his friend was gone. *[Deep*

interpretations of cultural aspects]

Another student expressed general empathy:

Evan: I think the gray fish could symbolize you will have to move on. At the end of the chapter I felt sad that his friend might have moved away because Francisco was so excited to go fishing with his friend. *[General expression of empathy]*

Chapter: "Christmas Gift"

Literature circle responses. In the chapter "Christmas Gift," Francisco was disappointed when he didn't receive the gift he was expecting, a red ball. The economic situation of Francisco's family was made evident in the picture book. Students watched a video of Francisco Jimenez recounting his Christmas experiences in "Christmas Gift".

In the following interaction, students discussed the economic situation of Francisco and other farm workers. Students stated facts and Noah perceived Francisco's sadness when he didn't receive the gift he wanted. Following is the verbatim transcription of a small group of students answering the questions "How do we know that Francisco's family doesn't have money?" and "How does Francisco feel when he doesn't get what he wanted for Christmas?"

Noah: As they [Francisco's family] went and bought the [meat] bones they lied and said they were for the dog. [The butcher] left more and more meat on them. It was generous.

[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas/Implied empathy]

Claire: [The butcher] reduced the price of the meat itself. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Claire: We know that he doesn't don't have very much money because they had to go work on farms. They didn't even have enough money to buy the guys wallet for .48 cents. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Lucas: You can tell they're poor because in this chapter they went to a farm and asked for money because they like asked if they could help because they didn't have money so they said, "sure you can work and pick some cotton," so they just made a tent. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Noah: Francisco was sad because he couldn't get the red ball but he was grateful because he at least got some candy and he was sad for his mom because she was crying because she wasn't able to get the red ball for him. *[Perspective taking]*

In the following excerpt, Seth expressed empathy for Francisco, but Cole and Maria were apathetic. Seth explicitly stated that he had been in the same circumstances, which allowed him to take Francisco's perspective. Cole and Maria expressed views that opposed Seth's. Seth felt for Francisco, Cole and Maria did not. Maria made reference to the video of Francisco retelling the Christmas account as an adult. In the video he was filled with emotion because of how upset his mom was. Following is the verbatim transcription of another literature group answering the question, "How did you feel at the end of the chapter?"

Seth: I felt I can actually relate to him. I didn't get what I wanted for my birthday.

[General expression of empathy/Perspective taking]

Cole: I feel like he is ungrateful. All he wants is a ball. *[Apathy/Expression of opposing view]*

Maria: He got a bag of candy and got his mom upset! *[Apathy/Expression of opposing view]*

In yet another literature circle, students discussed their feelings in response to the chapter. Landon was clearly empathetic towards Francisco. Both Sean and Landon were able to place themselves in a different time period to understand Francisco more.

The interaction between Landon and Sean at first included opposing views; however, Landon commented to agree with Sean's point of view. Following is a verbatim transcription of students answering the question, "How did you feel at the end of this chapter? Why?"

Landon: I kind of felt for him. *[General expression of empathy]*

Sean: We're so spoiled now unlike them back then. *[Perspective taking/Expression of opposing view]*

Landon: We're so spoiled. We get laptops for Christmas. *[Perspective taking]*

Journal responses. Students responded to a prompt asking them about their Christmas experiences. The following is a written response to the questions "Have you ever had an experience like Francisco's?" "How was your experience the same or different from Francisco's?" and "How did you feel at the end of the chapter?" Sean mentioned feeling bad for the character and contrasted his perspective with Francisco's:

Sean: Yes, it was a racecar, but instead I got a stirring wheel for my Xbox, but I loved that present too. It was different because I still got spoiled and he just got a bag of candy. I

felt bad because he really wanted the red ball. *[General expression of empathy/Perspective taking.]*

Chapter: “Death Forgiven”

Pre-reading responses. Students expressed concerns about the upcoming chapter because of its title. These comments implied an emotional connection, an investment to the characters and their lives. The following dialogue was recorded after reading "Christmas Gift" in anticipation for reading "Death Forgiven."

Lucas: I’m scared, nervous for the next chapter. It says "Death Forgiven." *[Implied empathy]*

Mya: I’m nervous for the next chapter too. It says death. *[Implied empathy]*

Literature circle responses. After Francisco’s dad killed the pet parrot out of frustration and anger, students discussed the relationship of the pet to the family. Richard referred to Francisco’s Catholic prayers and Evan was mistaken to think that the Hail Mary mentioned in the book referred to a sports play. Richard’s understanding of the reference to the Catholic prayer was labeled a deep interpretation of a cultural aspect. Richard took Francisco’s perspective in explaining his affection to the pet parrot. The interaction that follows was one of clarification. Richard correctly defined what a Hail Mary was. Richard also explained his answer about Francisco’s relationship with the parrot with questioning from Ms. Hunt. The following dialogue is a verbatim transcription of students answering the questions “What does Francisco do after *Perico* dies?” and “How do you know Francisco had a close relationship to his parrot?”

Richard: He prays for the parrot and his dad. He goes to the shed and prays.

I think it was some Hail Mary’s. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Ms. Hunt: Do you know what a Hail Mary is?

Evan: When you throw the ball really fast in football. [*Stereotypical information or misinformation*]

Richard: It's just a small prayer. [*Statement of facts only/Clarification*]

Ms. Hunt: When can you say it?

Richard: You can say it whenever.

Richard: He visited his parrot's grave every day until they moved.

Ms. Hunt: What does that mean?

Richard: They had a huge affection. [*Perspective taking*]

In the following interaction, Landon perceived Francisco's emotion when he commented on the meaning of the title "Death Forgiven." Mya was very aware of her own emotions when she explicitly stated that not knowing Spanish stopped the tears from falling. The prayer Francisco says in the text is in Spanish. The interactions specific to this conversation included the expression of similar strong emotions using the word "depressing." Mya, Sean and Landon built on each other's similar ideas to discuss the possible meaning of the chapter. Landon stated a rhetorical question at Mya's frustration of not knowing what the Spanish words of the prayer. The group of students responded to questions about *El Perico's* death. Students answered the questions "How did Francisco feel after *El Perico* died?" and "How do you know Francisco had a close relationship to *El Perico*?" in the following verbatim transcription.

Mya: They were saying Spanish words like slowly and stuff. And I was on the break of tears then they kind of went back in when he started and I was like "you're killing the sad mood! [*Consciousness of own emotion/Empathy blocked by lack of information*]

Landon: And at the end he would visit his grave every day. They were close.

Sean: The dad swung a broom and hit him and he fell to the floor. *[Statement of facts only]*

Mya: Well, really sad, I mean, his best friend just died. *[Perception of character's emotions/Expression of similar emotion]*

Landon: He was like, "Why would you that?" He ran to the shed. *[Perspective taking/Asking a question]*

Mya: That's probably why it's called *Death Forgiven* because he forgives his dad maybe? *[Asking a question/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Sean: When he was praying, it says, "I prayed for *El Perico* and my dad." *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Landon: "and my father, then I prayed for my father." *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Mya: He's probably saying something like forgive my father or something. *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Mya: Now I 'm like pretty depressed and now I have to think about things. That was sad. I was like starting to tear up and then you came along with, you were literally like *D-I-ose*. Like really slow, not even like fluent. You were just saying it one at a time. You could have at least gone a little bit fast instead of one word per second. *[Consciousness of own emotion/Expression of similar emotion/Empathy blocked by a lack of information]*

Landon: How are you supposed to be fluent if you have no idea what the language is? *[Asking a question]*

Landon and Mya: That was a depressing story, I mean chapter. *[Consciousness of own emotion/Expression of similar emotion]*

Sean: If I could only hear what the prayer said.

Mya: We have to learn Spanish so we can learn it.

Journal responses. Following are students' written responses to the questions "How did you feel when *El Perico* died?" and "How did you feel when *El Perico* died?" Logan expressed apathy when he reacted to the parrot's death:

Logan: I felt happy because that bird *Perico* was very annoying because the bird would copy what someone would say. I had a fish that died and I was sad when it died. He felt surprised and sad. [*Apathy*]

The other students expressed a variety of empathetic responses; several used descriptive adjectives to record their feelings:

Maria: I felt sad when *Perico* died because Francisco and his family cared a lot about him. I had a parikeet that died. I felt sad and unhappy he died. I bet Francisco felt really sad because that was his true friend. [*General expression of empathy*]

Noah: Sad because he loved the bird as much as the family. [*General expression of empathy*]

Several students responded with descriptive forms of empathy:

Cole: I felt sad for Francisco because his pet just died. Well, when my cat died I felt very sad and a bit mad. Francisco is in shock that his father did what he did. [*More descriptive empathy with adjectives*]

Richard: I would feel really sad. He felt sad. He visited his grave every day. [*More descriptive empathy with adjectives*]

Mya: I bet Francisco was sad when *Perico* died, because it's sad to lose a pet, I should know, 5 birds in my life died. Sooooo it was depressing. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Sean: I felt bad because *Perico* was almost part of the family. I felt really sad because it was part of the family. He felt sad because he went to visit the grave every day. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Brooklyn: I felt sad when *Perico* died. When my dog _____ died I was very sad and at a loss for words. Francisco felt like a part of him left his body. *[Perspective taking/More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Claire: I felt really sad and mad at *Papá*. I would cry for days, I would miss her so much. He felt so sad that he wanted to die. *[Perspective taking/More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Chapter: "Cotton Sack"

Pre-reading responses. As an introduction to the chapter, students watched a video showing the life of child farm workers. They also saw photographs of the farm workers picking strawberries and reviewed a map of California's major crops. When asked the question "How do your fruits and vegetables get to your grocery store?" the following dialogue resulted. Landon asked questions that implied empathy to which Seth responded with a literal answer:

Landon: Why [did children] have to do that [work]? Why would they make them do that [work]? *[Implied empathy]*

Seth: Children can pick and get things easier. *[Literal interpretation]*

Other students commented by only stating facts:

Cole: Well, people pick the plants and then give them to trucks. *[Statement of facts only]*

Noah: The braceros in the fields. [Statement of facts only]

Seth: They are washed and sanitized then go to the factory. [Statement of facts only]

Landon: The Mexicans wash them after they are done picking them. [Statement of facts only]

Seth: The braceros pick them then someone would wash them then put them on a truck and send them to the grocery store. [Statement of facts only]

Literature circle responses. In the chapter “Cotton Sack” students read about the circumstances of farm workers in the cotton fields including harsh weather conditions and low wages for time spent picking cotton. Mya’s rhetorical question implied empathy. A lack of information about the equivalent of eighteen dollars in Francisco’s day prevented Lucas and Evan from responding empathetically. Mya expressed an opinion different from that of Lucas and Evan; opposing views were presented. Her rhetorical question encouraged further discussion. Lucas and Evan express ideas similar to the others.

The following is a verbatim transcription of students answering the questions “How much cotton did the family pick in one day?” and “Why was *Papá* worried?”

Mya: 600 lbs. and they only got 18 dollars for that?!!! [Implied empathy/Asking a question]

Lucas: Back then that was like a lot of money. [Empathy blocked by lack of information/Expression of opposing view]

Evan: That’s a lot of money guys. ONLY 18 dollars?! That’s a lot of money. [Empathy blocked by lack of information/Expression of opposing view]

Another group of students answered the questions “How much cotton did the family pick in one day?” and “Why was *Papá* worried?” Seth took the perspective of Francisco’s father and

also perceived his emotions in the following verbatim transcription of a small group discussion. In the following portion of the interaction, Logan and Seth shared similar ideas.

Logan: And he needs the money. [*Sharing of similar ideas*]

Seth: I think he's also worried about putting food on the table. [*Perspective taking/Perception of character's emotions/sharing of similar ideas*]

Journal responses. Students were asked to describe how they would feel if they had to work picking fruits. The written responses resulted in students taking the perspective of a farm worker. Following are student's responses to the journal prompts "Describe what you think it would be like to pick cotton all day." "Would you like it? Why or why not?" "What fruit or vegetable would you prefer to pick and why?" "Describe how the fruits and vegetables get to the grocery store."

Logan: I think it would be hard and it would hurt your back a lot because of how much your bending over. I would not like it. Because of how hard it is, how much you have to bend over, and the conditions you work in. I would like to pick strawberries because they just seem easy to pick. Farmers pick them and sell them and then the stores sell them. [*Perspective taking*]

Richard: I would not like picking cotton because it will hurt your back plus it pokes you which is going to be annoying. I would pick strawberries because it doesn't poke you. They grow them and then pick them. [*Perspective taking*]

When Mya took the perspective of a farm worker, she showed descriptive empathy using extra adjectives:

Mya: Picking cotton would be pretty boring if you were to do it constantly all day. I would HATE picking cotton all day long. I take pity on your family Francisco. My fruits

and vegetables come from a field, then the *braceros* or the people pick them and pack them up boxes which are then put in a truck and carried to the grocery store. *[Perspective taking/More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Brooklyn, Claire and Noah took the farm worker's perspective and stated facts that were directly connected to their empathetic responses:

Brooklyn: I think it would be very tiring. I would not like it because I would have to be in the hot sun for hours at a time. [I would pick] strawberries because you could easily spot the bright red in the dark green leaves. I think it would just be easier. Well, first people pick them, wash them, and then send them in trucks or planes, even boats, to get them to a store. *[Perspective taking/Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Claire: It would be hard. I'd get really hot or really cold. I feel like I would be really scratched up by the end of the day from the bulbs. I wouldn't like it very much because I would get really beat up from the bulbs and I wouldn't want my childhood taken away from me. *[Perspective taking/Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Noah: It would be hard because it is exhausting. You get no breaks, no water. [I would plant] strawberries because they don't hurt and don't care if it is wet [like cotton].
[Perspective taking/Statement of facts linked with empathy]

Chapter: "The Circuit"

Pre-reading responses. Before reading this chapter as a large group, we discussed Francisco's character. I asked the students how they perceived Francisco up to that point in the book. Cole, Mya and Seth commented on Francisco's job as a farm worker that made him somewhat different. The following dialogue resulted from the questions "How do you perceive

Francisco? Do you see him as a sixth grader like yourself?” Early on in the unit, students read about Francisco’s experiences with bullies. Noah’s response contained misinformation:

Noah: I think he’s just like a normal sixth grader because he’s not getting bullied or anything. *[Stereotypical information or misunderstanding]*

Other students responded with deep interpretations of cultural aspects, taking into account Francisco’s life as a farm worker:

Cole: I think he’s a sixth grader and a worker. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Mya: He’s a sixth grader, but you hear about how he works and goes to school. If it [the book] didn’t say how he works he would be just like a normal sixth grader. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Seth: There’s two kinds [of students]. Someone that goes home and relaxes and the kind that goes home to work. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Literature circle responses. In the chapter "The Circuit," Francisco was enjoying school and anticipated learning to play the trumpet from a teacher that was mentoring him. When he arrived home to tell his parents about his exciting day, he found out that his family was moving once again. Students responded empathetically and placed themselves in Francisco’s situation. They also perceived Francisco’s and Mr. Lema’s emotions without explicitly expressing empathy. When discussing this chapter, Noah clarified Evan’s confusion about the family that would be moving. Noah and Evan both asked questions that encouraged discussions and opinions related to other parts of the book. The following verbatim transcription of a small group discussion resulted from the questions “How do you think Francisco felt about Mr. Lema?” “How do you think Francisco felt when he arrived home and found out he was moving?” and “How would you feel?”

Mya: Maybe he feels the same way that I feel about Ms. Hunt. Ms. Hunt is really nice.

[Perspective taking/Perception of character's emotions.]

Mya: That's so sad. That's kind of sad. He's going to teach him trumpet now they're going to be moving? That's sad. *[General expression of empathy]*

Evan: I didn't even know they were moving. There was just cardboard boxes.

Noah: Yeah they had to unpack and they always put it in cardboard boxes.

[Clarification]

Mya: And what about his teacher? What is he going to tell his teacher? *[Asking a question/Encouragement of discussion]*

Noah: How is he going to tell his teacher? *[Asking a question]*

Evan: He's not going to tell his teacher.

Mya: He's gonna like come to school today and he's not going to be there.

Mya: It's kind of like, remember how Francisco's friend left when they were going to make fishing poles? Kind of like that but except the teacher is going to feel that.

[Perception of character's emotions]

Noah: Good relation to the book, Mya.

Students of another literature circle responded to the same questions. The following verbatim transcription of the discussion resulted from the questions "How do you think Francisco felt about Mr. Lema?" "How do you think Francisco felt when he arrived home and found out he was moving? How would you feel?" Maria perceived Francisco's emotions. Claire's response implied empathy when she stated that Francisco's family told him they would not move for the whole season. Logan placed himself in Francisco's situation, as did Claire.

Maria: He should be happy because he likes his teacher. *[Perception of character's emotions]*

Logan: I would feel really sad and surprised. I learned English then I have to go.
[Perspective taking/Implied empathy/Expression of similar emotion]

Claire: They also told him they were going to stay the whole season. *[Implied empathy]*

A range of responses resulted from the question “What kind of social/emotional challenges do farm workers face?” Students shared similar ideas about the challenges farm workers face and they expressed similar emotions about the news Francisco received when he arrived home. Following is the verbatim transcription of students’ responses in a small group.

Logan: Probably everyone is sad and mad because they have to move around so they CAN earn money. *[Perception of character's emotions/Expression of similar emotion/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Sean: Probably really stressful. *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Maria: They can't go to school because they are so busy working. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Claire: They probably feel like they can't have any friends because then they lose them and then it's like really hard. *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Logan: We moved from _____ to _____ and from _____ to _____. We moved around in the states for my dad's job. Now works in _____ for _____.

The same students discussed the question “Why do they boys hide from the school bus?” One student clarifies misinformation presented by the other student. Logan clarified the reason Roberto and Francisco hid when the school bus came by. The verbatim transcription of the small group discussion follows.

Claire: Because maybe it was like really hot. [*Stereotypical information or misinformation*]

Logan: They're not supposed to be out of school and working. They are supposed to be in school and they don't want to get in trouble and they want to keep working so they can earn more money. [*Statement of facts only/Clarification*]

Journal responses. Students' responses to Francisco's situation and the plight of farm workers varied. Responses for the journal prompt "What are some social and emotional challenges that farm workers face?" are as follows. One student only stated facts:

Maria: They have to work hard all day every day. Migrant children don't have a very good education because they are outside working on a farm all day. They also don't make a lot of money, so it is probably hard for them to provide for their family. [*Statement of facts only*]

Two students responded with perspective taking:

Logan: Working hard, leaving there home it could also be frightening. [*Perspective taking*]

Claire: Migrant children feel probably overwhelmed or stressed. Maybe sad too if they leave friends a lot. [*Perspective taking*]

Responses to the questions "What happens when Francisco arrives home?" "How do you think Francisco felt?" and "How would you feel?" are as follows. Several students took Francisco's perspective:

Lucas: That is really cool, but he is moving. It would feel sad. I would be sad to be working in the hot field picking cotten. [*Perspective taking*]

Evan: When he arrives home he was excited to tell his parents that he's learning to play the trumpet. When he realized he was moving he felt really sad. If I was him I will be really mad because I would just be starting school and learning how to play the trumpet. Then we'll have to move. They don't have much food and money. *[Perspective taking]*

Noah: I would be very sad because he was going to play the trumpet. He doesn't fit in. *[Perspective taking]*

Maria: I bet Francisco felt really sad because he finally enjoyed something, but now he will lose what he loves. I would feel surprised and upset if I were Panchito. *[Perspective taking]*

Brooklyn took Francisco's perspective and also made reference to the aspects of a farm worker's life:

Brooklyn: If I were Francisco, I would feel very sad that I was leaving where my favorite school is. I think some of the challenges are because they move so much it's hard for Francisco to keep making new friends. It was pretty hard to deal with. *[Perspective taking/Deep interpretation of cultural aspects]*

Richard took on Francisco's perspective used more descriptive empathy to explain his feelings:

Richard: There moving. He felt really sad. I would be really mad. I feel really sad for them. *[Perspective taking/More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perception of character's emotions]*

Chapter: "Learning the Game"

Pre-reading responses. The pre-reading discussion involved reviewing some of the challenges faced by migrant farm workers. The following dialogue resulted from the question "What physical challenges do migrant farm workers face?" Students responded with facts:

Claire: No heaters. [Statement of facts only]

Noah: Pesticides. It isn't safe. [Statement of facts only]

Landon and Seth: Probably unsafe or unfair working conditions. Pesticides. Heat can cause heat waves. They can get frostbite, sunburn, start peeling. [Statement of facts only]

Lucas: Heat stroke. [Statement of facts only]

Literature circle responses. In the chapter “Learning the Game,” Gabriel, another farm worker, had a disagreement with his boss, the *contratista*. When Gabriel defied his boss’s authority, he was fired and deported. Gabriel did not comply with the *contratista*’s request to pull the plow with his waist. Students discussed the events with facts. Following is the verbatim transcription of students discussing the questions “What do we know about Gabriel?” “What is the disagreement about?” and “What does the *contratista* ask Gabriel to do?”

Seth: He (Gabriel) hasn't seen his family in months. [Statement of facts only]

Landon: He's only making a few dollars a week. [Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]

Richard: He's telling them about his family. [Statement of facts only]

Landon perceived Gabriel’s emotions as he recounted some of the events of the chapter:

Landon: He thought it wasn't fair that he had to pay all of his money to him, hardly enough money to pay for himself and his family. [Perception of character's emotions/Sharing of similar ideas]

Landon: He had to plow a field by himself. [Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]

Next, Seth made a comment based on misinformation regarding the animal in the text. Students shared similar ideas about Gabriel's experience. Landon clarified that the animal in the book was an ox and not a buffalo as mentioned by Seth.

Seth: And he said umm, people like in his country that they have buffalos or something.

[Stereotypical information or misinformation/Sharing of similar ideas]

Landon: Oxen *[Statement of facts only/Clarification]*

Seth: To plow, but he wanted him to tie it around his waist and make him drag it.

[Statement of facts only]

Lucas: And then he got in a fight and then he got fired. *[Statement of facts only]*

Lucas: He got fired and deported. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

In the following discussion, Brooklyn and Mya made reference to the accent of the speaker reading the audio version of "Learning the Game." The reader had a distinct Chicano accent. Mya and Brooklyn recounted Gabriel's experience with facts and at the same time Brooklyn took Gabriel's perspective using his words. Mya and Brooklyn expressed similar opinions about the Mexican American accent and they shared similar ideas when retelling the events of Gabriel's argument. Following is a verbatim transcription of students answering the questions "What did you think of the reader's voice?" "What does Francisco learn about Gabriel the first day at work?" and "What was the disagreement about?"

Brooklyn: It just sounded normal to me. *[Expression of similar opinion]*

Mya: It was normal, but it had an accent to it, a Spanish accent. *[Expression of similar opinion]*

Mya: [Gabriel] has a family and he doesn't get to see them. And he sends them money to buy food for a few months. *[Statement of facts only]*

Mya: They had a fight over, like, [the *contratista*] was making [Gabriel] pull like a hoe, or plow. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Brooklyn: Gabriel thought “I’m not an animal. In his country only ox pull the plow.”

[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]

Journal responses. Written responses to the chapter “*Learning the Game*” varied including facts when discussing the nature of Francisco’s job picking crops. Cole answered the question, “Why is Francisco not excited about summer?” with facts:

Cole: Because he has to work for 133 days! *[Statement of facts only]*

Following, are the written responses to the question, “How would you feel if you had to work all summer?” Sean responded with empathy supported by facts:

Sean: Very unhappy because you barely get to play or do anything fun. Sad because he can’t take care of his family any more. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Brooklyn and Noah both responded with perspective taking:

Brooklyn: I would feel tired and most likely in pain because I would be on my hands and knees all day. *[Perspective taking]*

Noah’s response, however, included more descriptive empathy due to his choice of words:

Noah: I would hate it. It would be hard to work all day. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Following are the responses to the journal prompt, “What were your feelings when Gabriel got fired?” One student answered with implied empathy:

Brooklyn: I don’t know why but I felt guilty probably because the owner should not of fired Gabriel. He was a great friend and worker. *[Implied empathy]*

Two students responded to Gabriel’s situation by expressing empathy in general:

Claire: I was sad for Gabriel and mad at Diaz. *[General expression of empathy]*

Landon: I felt sad because he has a family to take care of and he doesn’t have a job now and he can’t take care of his family. *[General expression of empathy]*

Several students responded to Gabriel’s situation with empathy and supporting their opinion with facts they learned in the unit:

Evan: When Gabriel was fired I felt sad because he said he had a family and he needed his job so he could send money to them so they can buy food. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Maria: I felt bad when Gabriel got fired because he needed the money for his family. It might be hard for him to find another job to make and afford money for his family. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Mya: Francisco isn’t excited for summer because he has to spend 133 days picking strawberries, cotton, and grapes. That does NOT sound fun! It was sad that Gabriel got fired. I mean, he needs money for his family and now he has no way of doing that unless he gets a new job in Mexico. I guess at least he did the right thing and he gets to see his family. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Chapter: “To Have and to Hold”

Literature circle responses. Francisco’s home burned down when *Mamá* accidentally used gas for the stove instead of kerosene. When students reacted to the events in this chapter, they interpreted cultural aspects relating to the circumstances of migrant farm workers. Students took Francisco’s perspective reflecting on the fire, the burned home, Francisco’s burned notebook, and Rorra stealing a penny from his collection. Students recounted the events only

stating facts, not necessarily expressing empathy while doing so. Following is a verbatim transcription to the question, “What were your reactions to the chapter?”

Cole: I think the most anxious part for me is when the whole kitchen went on fire.

[Consciousness of own emotion]

Lucas: The most sad thing is that they have to live in a camp now. They can't live in like a home. It was better than a camp. And also I would be real mad too. *[General expression of empathy/Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

Richard: I'd be mad if my little sister stole from me. *[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*.

Richard: If we didn't know English and we needed [our spelling list] [I'd be sad].

[Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]

Richard took Francisco's perspective when responding to how he must have felt when Carl wanted to see where he lived. When asked the question “How is Carl's house different from Francisco's?” the following response was recorded.

Richard: Carl asks Francisco when they are gonna go to his house. Francisco says he doesn't want to because his house looks horrible and it's embarrassing. *[Perspective taking]*

As expected, a retelling of the events in the chapter resulted in the statement of facts only. In their literature circle, students expressed similar strong emotions about the fire. They expressed sadness or anger. The following verbatim transcription is a dialogue of the small group discussion.

Richard: They got gasoline instead of kerosene. They put it in the tank. Roberto says it smells like gasoline. So he went to go tell his dad. His dad says nothing. It's just cheap

kerosene. Two minutes later it blows up and the stove is on fire. The fireman comes.

Francisco loses his book in the fire. *[Statement of facts only]*

Lucas: He had pennies and now he has to hold on to it, but doesn't work. He loses them.

[Statement of facts only]

Following is the verbatim transcription of another group of students responding to their questions in their literature circle. When discussing the differences between Carl's home and Francisco's home, Logan made a deep interpretation of the living circumstances of migrant farm workers. Logan answered the question "How is Carl's home different from Francisco's home?"

Logan: Carl's is like cotton stuff and carpet and Francisco's is a shack. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

Next, Logan used a logic chain to discuss the risks that migrant farm workers could face. His response was a connection of cultural aspects including the need for a passport or visa to be able to enter the United States. Students collaborated to share the ideas and events related to the fire. Following is a verbatim transcription the questions "How did the house catch on fire?" and "Was a similar fire a risk for other field workers?"

Logan: Their house caught on fire. She put beans on the stove and she lit a match.

[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]

Noah: Instead of putting kerosene they accidentally put gas. *[Statement of facts only/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Logan: It could be a risk because it could have burned out all the crops and they would have to pay a lot of money and then they would be sent back to Mexico because of all the damage and they don't have a passport. *[Deep interpretation of cultural aspect]*

In yet another literature circle, students responded to questions with a deep interpretation of personal experiences and perspective taking. Landon compared Francisco's experience of wanting to hold on to his precious items to something he could relate to: computer time. Claire and Landon shared similar ideas in the literature circle interaction that follows. In the following verbatim transcription students answered the question "Why do you think this chapter is called *To Have and to Hold?*"

Claire: He has precious things but he wants to keep them. *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Landon: If you have it, you want to hold on to it as long as you can. It's kind of like my family. We only get 30 minutes on the computer and then it's someone else's turn. You want to stay on as long as possible. *[Deep interpretation of a personal experience/Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

Journal responses. The following written responses are student answers to the questions "How did you feel when Francisco found out his *librito* had burned in the fire?" and "How would you feel if one of your precious items burned in a fire?" Student written responses reflected descriptive empathy with adjectives:

Evan: I would feel sad and when I read it I gasped and started crying a little. If my house was in a fire, I'd feel sad but I always wanted to be a hobo. I think that would be awesome. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Noah: Deprest because he loved his *librito* and he had all his work their. Devistated because it is important to me and I could never get another one. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Seth: Horrible because your watching it burn down all around it and you have memories with it and then it's just gone. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives]*

Other students responded with descriptive empathy to describe their reactions as well as perspective taking:

Cole: I would feel very sad because my own possession just incinerated that would also make me angry. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Maria: I know that he felt unhappy that his *librito* got burned in the fire, and that was what made me sad for him. If something I loved got burned in a fire, I would feel really depressed and heart-broken because I really value my possessions. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Lucas: I bet he felt devastated because his *librito* is everything to him. I would feel sad because it is my precious thing. And it would hurt to lose it. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Brooklyn: I would feel very depressed because I lost something from my childhood and something very precious to me. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Logan: I felt sad, surprised, and hurt. I would feel mad and sad and surprised and start to look for a new thing to replace the one that got lost. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Richard: If I were Francisco, I would feel horrible because he needed that book for spelling. If I lost something like that, I would feel horrible if that happened. *[More descriptive empathy with adjectives/Perspective taking]*

Mya responded with descriptive empathy and made a deep connection based on her personal experience:

Mya: One of my worst nightmares is losing something special of mine to a fire. I hope it'll never happen, but in this chapter that's exactly what happened. So I kind of got emotional in this chapter. I felt for Francisco. [More descriptive empathy with adjectives /Deep interpretation of personal experiences]

Chapter: "Moving Still"

Pre-reading responses. Before reading "Moving Still," we read the picture book *Harvesting Hope* as a class. *Harvesting Hope* tells the story of Cesar Chavez and his fight for the rights of migrant farm workers in a picture book. When Cesar Chavez marched at the head of migrant farm workers, the farm workers carried both the Mexican flag, the American flag, and a flag of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*. In our class discussion about the picture book, Claire recognized the picture of the *Virgen*:

Claire: Look it's La Virgen! [Statement of facts only]

We also talked about key words found in the Declaration of Independence. Students defined "inalienable rights," "self-evident," "endowed," and "pursuit of happiness." The following response resulted when students were asked who the rights refer to in the Declaration of Independence. Empathy was alluded to; students expressed the view that immigrants must be in the United States legally to enjoy the rights stated in the Declaration of Independence:

Noah: They can become legal by going to court. They still have the rights, but they need to go to court and [do the process]. [Empathy with a condition]

Literature circle responses. In the chapter "Moving Still," Francisco was memorizing the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence as part of a class assignment. He had just

finished memorizing the Preamble when a border patrol agent appeared in Francisco's classroom to take him into custody. Someone had divulged Francisco's status. Following is a verbatim transcription of a small group discussing the question "What happens today if *la migra* raids a place with undocumented workers?"

Logan: La migra, if they find a lot of undocumented workers they'll take them back to Mexico. [Statement of facts only]

Seth: Or if they live in France they'll take them back to France. [Statement of facts only]

In the following conversation, Logan took Francisco's and Roberto's perspective when he described the difference between farm work and working in a store. Logan responded with perspective taking when they discussed the question "What would the job at the shoe store mean for Francisco and Roberto?" Following is the verbatim transcription of a small group discussion.

Logan: It was also they don't have to bend down working in the hot sun. When they were bending down it ruins your back. At the shoe store you can stand up straight and don't have to put so much work on your body. [Perspective taking]

Students responded with a deep interpretation of cultural aspects when they discussed the question "Who comes for Francisco at the beginning of Miss Ehlis' class? What do you think this means?" The verbatim transcription of the students' discussion is as follows.

Logan: Somehow they found out that Panchito and the family was from Mexico. They're probably going to get deported. [Deep interpretation of cultural aspects]

During the time of the Bracero Program in the United States, once sufficient Mexicans had been given permits to enter and work on the farms, the government no longer issued work permits to them. The lack of money as a reason for not having a passport was based on misinformation; however, empathy was implied. The misinformed responses were given by

Lucas and Logan towards the end of the discussion. Lucas responded with empathy in the form of questions as to why the border patrol would go get Francisco from school. Lucas and Logan presented opinions that were opposite of one another. Lucas expressed empathy and confusion about the effects of the law on Francisco's life. Logan insisted that the immigrants had to enter legally to enjoy the inalienable rights. Lucas asked questions regarding the nature of inalienable rights and immigrants, which in turn encouraged discussion about the situation.

Following is the verbatim transcription to the question, "How do you interpret the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence that Francisco was memorizing?"

Logan: All men are created equal. They also have rights and they should have freedom, but they also need to follow the laws and they didn't come in legally. They should follow the laws and live how they want to, but they pretty much put it on themselves by coming into this country illegally. If they just took the time to go get a passport legally. *[Empathy with a condition/Apathy]*

Lucas: That's the thing. They couldn't because they didn't have the money to get the passport. *[Implied empathy/Stereotypical information or misinformation/Expression of opposing view]*

Logan: Then they should work for more money. I'm pretty sure this was a harder job than what they might have had in Mexico. *[Stereotypical information or misinformation/Expression of opposing view]*

Lucas: True.

Lucas: Why would they take a kid like our age? That's what I don't get. How did they even find them? *[Implied empathy/Asking a question]*

Logan: They have this new law that if you came in the United States and you didn't have a choice at a young age, then you wouldn't be held accountable. *[Statement of facts only/Encouragement of discussion]*

Lucas: Yeah, but we're a free country now. Shouldn't Mexicans and like other people be able to come for a better life? Shouldn't they be free? *[Implied empathy/Asking a question]*

Logan: They can, but they have to follow the law because if we have too many people and random people coming in, it can be dangerous. *[Empathy with a condition]*

Lucas: I think during Panchito's time, that's what they thought.

Richard and Lucas took Francisco's perspective and Mya expressed strong emotion.

Lucas' was aware of his emotion perspective when he opposes Mya's comment. Lucas and Mya presented opposing views of what it meant to be racist. Mya claimed Lucas was racist because he grouped Mexicans together and Lucas was defensive when he explained his line of reasoning. In doing so, he perceived Mya's strong emotion. The following verbatim transcription of a small group discussion resulted from the question, "Why does Francisco like Santa Maria so much?"

Richard: 'Cause his friends and his school is there. *[Perspective taking]*

Lucas: There's way more Mexican people there, not to be rude. *[Consciousness of own perspective]*

Mya: Racist! *[Expression of opposing opinion]*

Lucas: No, he has more friends there that are Mexican. That's not racist. *[Expression of opposing opinion/Perception of peer's emotion]*

In another literature circle discussion, Noah made reference to Francisco's school assignment. He mentioned the assignment and stated that the border patrol came when he had

just finished memorizing the words. His statement implied empathy. Noah literally spoke as if he were an immigrant and presented their point of view about the meaning of inalienable rights. The following is a verbatim transcription of a small group answering the question “Who comes for Francisco at the beginning of Miss Ehlis’ class? What does this mean?”

Noah: Illegal immigrant and he doesn’t have a work permit. *[Statement of facts only]*

Noah: And he was just learning the Declaration. *[Implied empathy]*

Mya and Noah shared similar ideas about the meaning of inalienable rights. Noah responded with perspective taking once more when discussing the question “How do you interpret the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence that Francisco was memorizing?”

Mya: Well, it was the part about all men are created equal and that they have the same amount of rights. *[Sharing of similar ideas]*

Noah: It’s kind of saying, “you do not take away my rights.” My skin color is different and I come from a different heritage. *[Perspective taking/Sharing of similar ideas]*

In the next discussion, Cole took Francisco’s and Roberto’s perspective to describe why they were excited at the new job possibility. Following is the verbatim transcription for students discussing the question “What could the job at the shoe store mean for them?”

Cole: Well, they’re excited because they actually get good payment I guess. What this would mean for them is that they can actually get a lot more money to buy more food. *[Perspective taking/Statement of facts only]*

Claire: I think it means that they can have a better salary and they’ll be able to earn more money for the family. *[Perspective taking]*

After discussing the job, both Claire and Cole expressed sadness and anger at the appearance of the border patrol. Their responses were empathetic in nature. Cole stated some

information that was inaccurate regarding children and youth deportations. Students answered the questions “Who comes for Francisco at the beginning of Miss Ehli’s class?” and “What do you think this means?” in the following verbatim transcription.

Claire: The real thing it means is that they found out that he is not born here. *[Statement of facts only]*

Cole: I think this means he has his own rights and freedoms in America. They think he can’t have his own rights because he’s from Mexico, because he crossed the border.

[Stereotypical information or misinformation]

Claire: It’s saying that we have the right to be free, we have the right to live our life we have the life to do what we want. The border patrol and the government, they think that he can’t have his own rights because he is from another country. *[Perspective taking]*

Students continued their conversation answering the question “What was your reaction when *la migra* came to get Francisco?” General expressions of empathy and perspective taking were noted. Both Cole and Claire expressed strong emotions similar in nature when they reacted to the border patrol’s appearance at Francisco’s school. The verbatim transcription of the group discussion follows.

Cole: I was a bit mad because Panchito was just barely getting to get along with his school and understanding English and then the *migra* come and get him. *[General expression of empathy/Expression of similar emotion]*

Claire: I was more sad for him. I would be so confused, like how did they find out I was not born here? And I would also be kind of sad I didn’t get to present what I was working so hard on. *[General expression of empathy/Perspective taking/Expression of similar emotion]*

In the next conversation, Claire clarifies Cole's misunderstanding about who can get deported by citing the video we watched on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) established by President Barack Obama. At the time of the study, DACA was still in effect and children could not be deported based on their age and the date of arrival to the United States. The following dialogue resulted from the question "Can people be deported from school today?"

Cole: Yes, because Donald Trump. Donald Trump, he's already done enough stuff against the Mexicans. *[Stereotypical information or misinformation]*

Claire: No, because of the Dreamers Foundation through elementary to high school. If they were come to my school I would not get deported because I'm a dreamer for the dreamer's foundation. *[Expression of opposing view/Clarification]*

Journal responses. Students responded to the question "Do you think it was fair for *la migra* to come and get Francisco and Roberto?" Several students expressed empathy citing factual evidence to support their responses:

Evan: I don't think it would be fair for the *la migra* to get them and put them back to Mexico because they never knew Mexico. They have friends, education, house, and food. They don't have any of that in Mexico. So, I don't think it would be fair. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Richard: It wasn't fair because he was going to learn the Declaration of Independence. *[Statement of Facts Linked with empathy]*

Noah: No because they are getting learning English and made friends. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Mya: It was not fair for the *la migra* to take Roberto and Panchito. If there is a declaration of Independence saying ALL men are created equal and should all have the

same rights, then that means it would be fair to come and take an American like me. If there is a paper stating ALL men have the same rights then I expect ALL men to have the same rights. This is not fair for Panchito and Roberto. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Cole: No! Because there were so young when they came to America and were just barely fitting. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Other students responded to the question of fairness with statements of facts linked with empathy as well as deep interpretations of cultural aspects:

Maria: I don't think it's fair for the *la migra* to take Panchito and Roberto. They should have the right to live where they want to live. They shouldn't have fear about having to be deported. I felt sad for Panchito because when *la migra* were taking him away, he was memorizing the Declaration of Independence. He was reading something that told him that he should have the right to live in the United States, and be happy, and just live his life. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy/ Deep interpretation of cultural aspects]*

Lucas: No, it was not fair because they work there butts off to earn money and to provide for their family. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy/ Deep interpretation of cultural aspects]*

Finally, Sean responded with empathy based on a condition along with a deep interpretation of cultural aspects:

Sean: It was not there fault to come over to America it was there mom and dad, but still I think they should make Mexico more safe and more like America. *[Empathy with a condition/Deep interpretation of cultural aspects]*

Students also responded to the prompt “Explain the meaning of the words, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” “What did these words mean for Panchito? What do they mean for other immigrants?” Landon responded to the questions with a statement of facts linked with empathy:

Landon: This means that ALL MEN are created EQUAL and to take the Mexican workers away is like ripping up the Declaration of independence...They could live here and try to achieve the impossible. No because they have as much right to be here as anyone else and they can do the impossible if we help them. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy]*

Other students responded by stating facts to support their empathetic response as well as deep interpretations of cultural aspects:

Brooklyn: What it meant for Panchito is, that no matter who you are, what race you are, but when your in America you have these rights that cannot be taken away, that your free to do whatever. They shouldn't have to be afraid to walk the streets, it's just not right. This goes for all the other immigrants. Most of them don't do anything bad. Accidentally running a stop sign shouldn't get you arrested. Like I already said, it's not right! It was no fair. IT wasn't their choice to come to America illegally. They didn't do anything wrong! *[Statement of facts linked with empathy/Deep interpretation of cultural aspects]*

Logan: It means that everyone has rights and that everyone is free. It means that everyone is equal and free and have rights. That they have freedom. It wasn't fair because they did nothing wrong and they have the right to stay there. *[Statement of facts linked with empathy/Deep interpretation of cultural Aspects]*

Summary of Responses

There were a variety of student responses throughout the unit. The range and variety of responses increased as students progressed through the book chapters. Student responses to the first chapters of the book up to and including the chapter “Christmas Gift” included a maximum of five types of responses. For example, at the beginning of the unit one student said, “I ...think they felt a little worried because if they get caught they will have to go back to Mexico.” Another said, “It can mean an illegal Mexican fingerprint” when interpreting an artist’s rendition of a Mexican flag embedded within a fingerprint pattern. Students used phrases such as “I think I would feel,” “I would feel,” “I bet they felt,” and “I would/wouldn’t like it if” when taking the characters’ perspectives about leaving one’s country, having a sick brother, not being able to work, and being immersed in a new language. Other common phrases at the start of the unit included “I felt sad/upset” when describing the tone of “Angel de Oro” and Miguelito’s disappearance and “I felt like he was ungrateful” to describe Francisco’s feelings at Christmas.

The complexity and variety of responses increased in the second half of the book beginning with “Death Forgiven” and going through “Moving Still.” There were between eight and eleven different responses recorded per chapter in the second half of the unit. Responses to the chapter “Death Forgiven” had the greatest variety of responses recorded. Variety was evident when students described the Hail Mary said by Francisco at the death of his parrot. Sample responses included “[A Hail Mary is] when you throw the ball really fast in football” and “It’s just a small prayer.” As students anticipated the start of “Death Forgiven” one student said, “I’m scared/nervous [for the next chapter].” After Francisco’s father killed *El Perico*, students expressed a myriad of emotions including, “[Francisco and *Perico*] had a huge affection,” “He’s

probably saying something like forgive my father,” “I was on the break of tears,” and “You were literally like D-I-ose... You’re killing the sad mood!”

Other themes addressed in the second half of the book included harsh working conditions, Francisco moving unexpectedly, deportation of a farmworker, a burning home, and Francisco’s detainment by the border patrol. Key phrases used by students included “I felt happy [the bird died],” “I felt bad/sad for,” “I would feel really sad/mad if,” “I would hate,” “The most sad/anxious part for me is,” “I got emotional when,” and “I would feel devastated/depressed/horrible/hurt if.” Sample key responses included “Why would they make [children] do that [work]?” and “I felt bad when Gabriel got fired because he needed the money for his family. It might be hard for him to find another job to make and afford money for his family.” The latter response reflected empathy combined with facts from the unit.

Stereotypical information or misunderstandings were minimal when seen as a whole. Only eleven stereotypical or misinformed statements were made in the unit, with one such statement made prior to starting the unit. Some of the stereotypical or misinformed statements included, “[A Hail Mary is] when you throw the ball really fast in football” and “Mexicans are fine. Their nachos are delicious!” When comparing their own jobs to Francisco’s, a student said, “The hardest job I have ever done was cleaning a giant bathroom... I think my job is harder than Francisco’s because all he had to do was watch his brother” failing to acknowledge Francisco’s heavy farm labor. Another student misinterpreted Francisco’s experiences at school, failing to acknowledge the bully incident when he stated, “I think he’s just like a normal sixth grader because he’s not getting bullied or anything.” Students misinterpreted the meaning of the border patrol taking Francisco and the laws regarding DACA. The following statements reflect confusion about the process. “I think this means he has his own rights and freedoms in America.

They think he can't have his own rights because he's from Mexico, because he crossed the border" and "Yes, [children in a school can be deported] because Donald Trump. Donald Trump, he's already done enough stuff against the Mexicans."

Apathetic responses were made in "Christmas Gift" when a couple of students claimed that Francisco made his mother cry and was ungrateful for the candy she gave him. "He got a bag of candy and got his mom upset!" Another student said he was happy when *El Perico* died because the bird was annoying.

Perspective taking was the most common response type overall. Key phrases that indicated students were taking the perspective of a character or the family included, "It's a cool experience when," "He feels bad for them because," "I think the family felt," "I would/wouldn't," "You feel like," "I know/don't know what it is like to," "I could never," "They probably feel," "I'd be mad/happy if," and "How did they find out I___." Perspective taking occurred in all chapters except "Soledad" and "Angel de Oro." The most perspective taking responses were recorded in the chapters "Inside Out," "The Circuit," and "To Have and to Hold."

Deep interpretations were recorded in all chapters except "Under the Wire," "Christmas Gift," and "Cotton Sack." In the chapters "Soledad," and "To Have and to Hold," those deep interpretations were based on a personal experience. Mya, for example, made a deep connection between her job and Francisco's in the following statement

The hardest job I've ever done is probably making dog his meals. He has this sickness so I have to grind up his food, add water, and mix it up with all these different medications...My experience with that job is probably different from Francisco's because I don't get paid and he does. And picking cotton all day is probably harder than making my dog's food.

All other deep interpretations were of cultural aspects. Deep interpretations of cultural aspects were made most often in the chapter “Inside Out.” Evan stated, “I think that the cocoon represents no freedom. I also think the butterfly represents his freedom and in a way friendship.” Students’ comparisons of the cocoon and the butterfly to the social and political aspects of Francisco’s life are examples of deep cultural interpretation.

Table 7 summarizes the themes of each chapter and the types of student responses, with the frequency of each response shown in parentheses. Types of responses in italics indicate a type of empathy. Types of responses in bold indicate those that were particular to literature circles.

Chapter	Main themes, key topics, or main events	Visual tools used to create the context	Types of responses by students (excluding interview responses)	Key Literature Circle Interactions
Under the Wire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal immigration • Leaving home country • Moving to a new country • Mexico-US Border • Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal photos of family • Images of green cards • Photos of the Mexico-U.S. Border & barbed wire • Prezi: Reasons families emigrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literal interpretation (1) • Stereotypical information of misunderstanding (1) • <i>Challenge to a stereotypes (1)</i> • <i>Implied empathy (1)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (8)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of similar ideas
Soledad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking cotton • Farm work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real cotton bolls • Cotton seeds • Map showing the crops Francisco's family picked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts (1) • Stereotypical information (1) • Empathy blocked due to lack of information (1) • <i>Perception of character's emotions (2)</i> • Deep interpretation of personal experiences (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of similar ideas
Inside Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Friendship • Attending a new school • Language barriers • Class pet (butterfly and cocoon) • Art class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>La Mariposa</i> picture book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Perspective taking (13)</i> • <i>Perception of character's emotions (1)</i> • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of similar emotion • Reference to peer's experience • Sharing of similar ideas
Miracle in Tent City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Saints • Poverty • Illness • Religious practices of immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo of a migrant camp • Infographic on Catholicism • Video on religion and immigration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts only (3) • <i>Perspective taking (3)</i> • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of similar ideas

El Angel de Oro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Moving • Deportation • Goldfish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital photos of goldfish & gray fish • Infographic on migrant farmworkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>General expression of empathy (3)</i> • Perception of character's emotions (4) • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of opposing view • Sharing of similar ideas
Christmas Gift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Christmas • Family • Christmas wish list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Christmas Gift</i> picture book • Video of Francisco Jiménez recounting the Christmas experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy (2) • Statement of facts (4) • <i>General expression of empathy (3)</i> • <i>Implied empathy (1)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (5)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of opposing view • Sharing of similar ideas
Death Forgiven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent stressors • Lack of work • Death of a pet • Religious beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wordle image with key words in the shape of a bird • Photo of a parrot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy (1) • Statement of facts (2) • Stereotypical information or misunderstanding (1) • Empathy blocked due to a lack of information (2) • <i>General expression of empathy (2)</i> • <i>Implied empathy (2)</i> • <i>More descriptive empathy with adjectives (6)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (4)</i> • Consciousness of own empathy/emotions (2) • Perception of character's emotions (1) • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking a question • Clarification • Information • Expression of similar emotion • Sharing of similar ideas

Cotton Sack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm workers • Poverty • Food production • <i>Los braceros</i> • Picking cotton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of <i>braceros</i> in the fields • Map of crops in CA • Images of wages per lb. of crop picked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts (5) • Literal interpretation (1) • Empathy blocked due to a lack of information (2) • <i>Implied empathy (2)</i> • <i>More descriptive empathy with adjectives (1)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (7)</i> • Perception of character's emotions (1) • <i>Statement of facts linked with empathy (3)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking a question • Expression of opposing view • Sharing of similar ideas
The Circuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving • Music class • Favorite teachers • Border Patrol • Fear of deportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of CA showing the crops Francisco's family picked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts (3) • Stereotypical information or misunderstanding (2) • <i>General expression of empathy (1)</i> • <i>Implied empathy (2)</i> • <i>More descriptive empathy with adjectives (1)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (11)</i> • Perception of character's emotions (5) • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking a question • Clarification • Encouragement of discussion • Expression of similar emotions • Information • Sharing of similar ideas
Learning the Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm workers • Deportation • Recess games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video on child farm workers • Images of working conditions for <i>braceros</i> • <i>Bracero Program</i> PowerPoint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts (16) • Stereotypical information or misinformation (1) • <i>General expression of empathy (2)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification • Expression of similar opinions • Sharing of similar ideas

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implied empathy (1) • <i>More descriptive empathy with adjectives (1)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (3)</i> • Perception of character's emotions (1) • <i>Statement of facts linked with empathy (4)</i> • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (1) 	
To Have and to Hold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire disaster • Possessions of sentimental value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images of kerosene, a cooking pot and a penny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts only (4) • General expression of empathy (1) • <i>More descriptive empathy with adjectives (10)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (13)</i> • Consciousness of own emotions/ perspectives (1) • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (2) • Deep interpretation of personal experiences (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of similar emotions • Sharing of similar ideas
Moving Still	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deportation • Declaration of Independence • Border Patrol • Social studies class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Harvesting Hope</i> picture book • Images of WWII soldiers • Images of <i>braceros</i> • Video on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) • Images and key words of the Declaration of Independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of facts (7) • Stereotypical information or misinformation (5) • <i>Empathy with a condition (4)</i> • <i>General expressions of empathy (2)</i> • <i>Implied empathy (4)</i> • <i>Perspective taking (7)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking a question • Clarification • Encouragement of discussion • Expression of opposing view • Expression of similar emotion • Perception of peer's emotion • Sharing of similar ideas

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Statement of facts linked with empathy (10)</i> • <i>Consciousness of own perspective (1)</i> • Deep interpretation of cultural aspects (4) 	
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The statement of facts linked to empathy was recorded only in the chapters “Cotton Sack,” “Learning the Game,” and “Moving Still” found in the second half of the book. Student responses to Francisco being detained by the border patrol while he memorized the Declaration of Independence gave students ample opportunity to express empathy and provide evidence to support their emotions. Several students responded similarly to Maria’s journal response that follows

I don’t think it’s fair for the *la migra* to take Panchito and Roberto. They should have the right to live where they want to live. They shouldn’t have fear about having to be deported. I felt sad for Panchito because when *la migra* were taking him away, he was memorizing the Declaration of Independence. He was reading something that told him that he should have the right to live in the United States, and be happy, and just live his life.

Empathy embedded with deeper descriptions of emotion were recorded in several of the chapters in the second part of the book. When responding to “Death Forgiven” wherein Francisco’s dad kills the family parrot, students stated, “Soooooo it was depressing,” “Francisco felt like a part of him left his body,” “I was sad and at a loss for words,” “He felt so sad that the wanted to die,” and “Francisco felt like a part of him left his body.” In response to “Cotton Sack” and the conditions of farm workers, students used phrases such as “I would hate,” and “I

take pity.” When responding to the “The Circuit” and the effects of a migrant life; students used words such as “really sad,” and “really mad.” Students used the phrases “really depressed” and “heart-broken” in response to the chapter “To Have and to Hold” and Francisco’s loss of a home and precious notebook to a fire.

There were a few responses that indicated that a lack of information blocked a students’ ability to express empathy. Those responses occurred in the chapters “Soledad,” “Death Forgiven,” and “Cotton Sack.” For example, Evan’s lack of experience picking cotton all day resulted in the following statement: “The cotton poked him. It made him bleed, but it didn’t when I was picking cotton.” Students made comments that showed a consciousness of their own perspectives or emotions in the chapters “Death Forgiven,” “To Have and to Hold,” and “Moving Still.” Students either explicitly stated “I started to feel” or “The most anxious part for me was.”

Summary of Literature Circle Interactions

The most common interaction among students during their small group discussions was the sharing of similar ideas (see Table 7). Sharing similar ideas included discussing events and how they played out. It also included a type of brainstorming. For instance, students’ built on each other’s ideas discussing why the conductor gave Francisco a bag and what was in the bag. Ideas included to be nice, to be nice and to realize they have been working hard, maybe they were hungry, it was a prize for them, it was a piece of candy, they were toys, the conductor felt bad for them and he wanted them to have food to eat.

When discussing the events of “The Circuit,” students clarified, asked questions, encouraged discussion, and expressed similar emotions. One student thought Roberto and Francisco were hiding because of the heat and another clarified that they boys were supposed to

be in school not working on the farms! Getting caught would mean more school and less earnings for the family, noted the student. Cole had to clarify to Evan that the cardboard boxes meant the family was moving. One student posed the question as to how Francisco would inform his teacher about the move which in turn encouraged discussion about how he might just disappear like Miguelito. Students expressed the challenges of migrant farmworkers with similar emotions noting stress, sadness, anger, busy lifestyles, difficulty making friends, and abrupt changes in daily living.

Interactions that resulted during the discussion of “Moving Still” included the perception of peers’ emotions, encouragement of discussion, and the expression of opposing views. When Mya called Lucas a racist for stating that Francisco liked Santa Maria because of the Mexican population there, Lucas was quick to respond to her emotion filled accusation by explaining that Francisco would logically feel more comfortable around Mexicans. Lucas’ response showed his perception of Mya’s emotion. The interaction also showed opposing views. When Lucas questioned the border patrol’s actions, Logan stated the facts regarding DACA which then prompted a series of comments and questions. While Lucas argued that all immigrants should be free, Logan expressed his point of view giving reasons such as safety and laws as part of the discussion.

Interviews

The student interviews at the end of the unit provided deeper insight into the responses students made to *The Circuit* as they read during the course of the study. Student responses reflected comments previously made in class, but included more detail and reasoning. Logan remained reserved, whereas Noah, Claire, and Landon were less inhibited in talking about controversial topics such as illegal immigration and respect for those of other cultures.

Noah

The first thing I noticed about Noah was a language arts notebook with a list of Spanish words from *The Circuit* which he added to before each chapter. I noticed his desire to learn about the culture and the language. Noah's interpretations of the visual images shown at the start of the unit were literal in nature and many of his responses were factual, with few empathetic responses throughout the unit. Before beginning the book, I showed the class an image of a fingerprint with the overlay of a Mexican flag. Noah mentioned that he thought the image showed the fingerprints of undocumented immigrants caught at the border. He maintained this interpretation even at the end of the unit when I asked him about the comment.

Noah was of the mindset that Francisco and his family should have entered the United States the legal way; however, he still responded with degrees of empathy by using descriptive words and taking the character's perspective. He perceived that Francisco would have felt "depressed" to lose his special notebook and expressed that he would have felt "devastated" had the same thing happened to him. When discussing if he ever felt sad for Francisco, Noah obviously expressed sadness at tragic parts of the book such as when his little sister spent the penny from his coin collection.

Noah's description of what he learned about immigrants by reading *The Circuit* was general yet perceptive. He said what he learned about immigrants was the physically demanding work they did. To add to that, he said he learned of how important it was for them to provide for their families. During our interview, Noah indicated that Francisco wasn't any different than the other children, nor was he discriminated against for his heritage, as African Americans were in the history of the United States. He came to the conclusion that all people are human and that having different cultural and religious beliefs doesn't mean they are different as human beings.

When asked what people could do to be more understanding of immigrant families like Francisco's, Noah said that people should look past religious and cultural practices and they will find similarities.

Claire

Claire was outgoing and expressive throughout the entire unit. One of her closest friends was a Mexican boy she had known since fourth grade. Her family had an affinity for Mexican culture and made it part of their family traditions to have Mexican food on a regular basis. She mentioned being familiar with Mexican art such as the colorful architecture and being familiar with the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, a key religious aspect of Catholicism. Many of her responses were statements of empathy linked to factual information from the unit. She made deep interpretations of cultural aspects and of personal experiences.

One key idea that Claire shared was her worry for the physical demands on young migrant farm workers. She said she knew Mexicans worked as farmers, but hadn't considered their circumstances until reading *The Circuit*. She imagined the achy bodies of young boys and girls working the fields. Her empathetic response had its basis in the facts we covered in class. The amount of money the farm workers got paid for picking 600 pounds of cotton was her babysitting wage for one night! Claire made this personal connection expressing how unfair the migrant wage was because it provided little for families and the work was physically tough. Her interpretations were deep based on her personal experience.

When I asked Claire if there was a character she could relate to the most, she chose Francisco's mom. Claire saw herself as a nurturing individual in a family of ten siblings. She could see herself putting the needs of others before her own just as Francisco's mom did in the book. This comparison showed a form of empathy based on perspective taking.

Prior to reading *The Circuit*, Claire admitted that she thought obtaining a visa to enter the United States legally was an easy process. She didn't know who the border patrol or *la migra* was and she had only heard some general political commentaries on the news about President Donald Trump's immigration policies. Nevertheless, she attributed some of her changing opinions to the study of *The Circuit*. She told me it would be nice if all immigrants had easy access to a visa, but recognized that sometimes people need to leave dangerous or bad circumstances in their country. This empathy was based on her knowledge of the immigration laws we talked about as a class. Although Claire had some background information about Mexican immigration before the unit, she said that reading the book gave her factual details that she could now use to back up her own opinions and claims. In conversations with her father, she explained the difficulties immigrants face when trying to obtain visas. She said she presented her father with reasons for her opinions and got him to change his perspective! Again, her empathy was based on facts covered in the unit.

Some unique comments made by Claire included her desire to act. When I asked her if the book had helped her be more understanding of immigrants, she said that the book gave her a desire to help the immigrant community. She had an internal commitment to help migrant farm workers find better living environments and health care. These personal goals to make a difference were empathetic in nature.

Logan

Logan was soft spoken and well behaved in class. Ms. Hunt said he was a perfectionist. He was probably one of the few students who expressed empathy with a condition to be met. At the beginning of the book, Francisco illegally crawls into the United States from Mexico. Logan alluded to this point in the book when I asked him if there was ever a time he felt happy for

Francisco. He said that he felt happy that Francisco didn't get caught at the border because it gave him a chance to go to school and he wanted to see what happened once he made it across. Logan didn't express an opinion against the border crossing because the event led to curiosity and anticipation. Though Logan's did not explicitly express empathy in his desire for Francisco to cross the border and go to school, his response implied empathy for things to turn out well for Francisco.

When Logan expressed sadness about the fire in which Francisco lost his special *librito*, he said he had never lost anything precious to him, but he put himself in Francisco's place. In our whole-class discussion about inalienable rights, Logan was of the opinion that the rights referred to all people, including immigrants. When I asked some follow-up questions later in our interview, his response included more details. In our interview he said that everyone had rights, but everyone has to follow the laws as well. Freedom, he claimed, was conditional on obeying the laws of the country. In essence, he said that people, including immigrants, have to work to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The response was one of empathy with a condition. He wanted everyone to enjoy basic rights, but he also wanted them to earn the right. Logan's responses to issues of immigration and freedom reflected a deep interpretation of cultural aspects.

Landon

Even before we finished the introduction to the book, Logan was ready to read it independently. He was also anxious to get to the next chapter after reading a chapter in his literature circle group. His comments were thoughtful and deep. He was confident in making comments either in a large group or in a literature circle. Logan's responses to *The Circuit* were empathetic in nature because he easily took Francisco's perspective, often speaking as if he were

Francisco. Landon expressed ideas aloud that posed questions with empathetic tones, and he also expressed some conflicting ideas about his political beliefs and attitudes towards Mexicans.

Landon expressed sadness about Francisco's transient life that affected his schooling. This empathetic response was based on facts covered about the life of migrant farm workers. Landon also perceived Francisco's difficulties associated with moving, comparing the experience of moving to his own. The deep interpretation was based on a personal experience. The uncertainty of Francisco's possible deportation was another idea that created sadness for Landon, specifically the possible separation of Francisco from his parents. Again, Logan's empathy was linked to facts discussed as part of the unit.

During the interview, Landon expressed to me that a family member had been kidnapped by a Mexican. Seeing a Mexican in public would automatically elicit curiosity and defensiveness on his part. His initial response was to get away from them, but once he interacted with individuals of Mexican descent he realized that they were good people. He realized that knowing them was key in dispelling the negative feelings and confirming they weren't "dangerous terrorists." Logan was very conscious of those stereotypes, saying that he didn't want to sound mean. When I asked him if reading *The Circuit* had any influence on the change in perspective, he stated that "feeling and understanding" Gabriel's situation was what helped him change his attitudes. He said that reading about the inhumane treatment of migrant farm workers is what helped him realize that they are human beings, which then led to anger and sadness for their experiences. This comment was empathy clearly stated.

Further interview responses showed Landon's empathy in other situations, again based on facts. Landon expressed anger and frustration when he discussed Gabriel's deportation, mentioning the unfair treatment by his boss. He also kept using the words "really sad" when

describing how he felt. Landon claimed that Gabriel's boss treated him like some replaceable toy when in reality he was a human being. Landon expressed similar sadness when he recounted the situation of immigrant children as seen in the video we watched. He made reference to the injustice of a teen driver facing imprisonment for running a stop sign because he didn't have a social security number.

Landon responded with deep interpretations of the cultural aspects regarding the unfair treatment of migrant farm workers and the importance of farm work. Before reading *The Circuit* he thought farm workers were perfectly fine, but he later learned about the pesticides and physical demands on those that pick grapes, strawberries and lettuce. He then referenced the Bracero Program when he said,

[The migrant farm workers] were here when WWII was going on and all of our people were going to war and they were picking our food for us. I get that war doesn't pay well and neither does picking food. Picking food is more important. War is trying to protect us. Food is what keeps us sustained.

Another deep interpretation of a cultural aspect was Landon's response to the picture book *Harvesting Hope*. In the book, the farm workers are marching to boycott harsh working conditions and are seen carrying a Mexican flag, an American flag and a representation of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*. I asked Landon to explain why the migrant farm workers were carrying both flags, to which he responded, "peace between two nations." I asked for more details as a follow-up question. Taking the immigrants' perspective and speaking in first person, Landon said that it meant they wanted to be American even though they are Mexican.

Landon repeatedly told me that Mexicans weren't bad people, just different. Having different cultural beliefs doesn't make them bad nor does come to the United States legally

because they are just seeking a better life. Landon refuted the stereotype that Mexicans are bad people and also showed empathy in understanding the situation of immigrants. The logical chain that he used to form a conclusion also showed an understanding of cultural aspects.

When we were speaking, Landon expressed conflict about his political views; however, even in doing so, he expressed empathy with descriptive words. He was also very aware of aware of his thought process. Prior to reading the book, he had mixed feelings between sending Mexicans back to their country or welcoming them to the United States. He then stated that it was wrong to send them back to Mexico. He questioned why people had bad feelings towards Mexican immigrants because, as he saw it, they were human beings. People who harbored bad feelings toward the immigrants upset him, causing sadness and anger. Landon's responses continued to show a deep understanding of difficult cultural issues.

Landon expressed explicit empathy, claiming that the Declaration of Independence gives Mexicans the right to pursue happiness in the United States. He said it was upsetting to see people trying to push them back when all they were doing was trying to "live a happy life like us." "They have the same rights as we do," he stated.

The last idea expressed by Landon in our interview was a desire to defend Mexicans. A CNN report on donating blankets and clothing to the Navajo reservations inspired Logan to act on behalf of Mexicans, which meant standing up for those who are treated badly. His desire to help was based on both his personal experience watching the news and understanding the reality of how migrant farm workers are treated.

Summary of Interview Responses

Responses in the interviews mirrored student responses in discussion groups and in written journal reflections. Interview responses gave students the opportunity to explain previous

comments and provide background information and support for their perspectives. The interview responses varied by student, but generally expressed some type of empathy. Even Noah, who was literal in his thinking, expressed worry, sadness, or concern for Francisco and his family's experiences. Claire's interactions with Mexicans before the unit gave her a unique perspective as she read the book. Even though her attitudes towards Mexicans were positive to begin with, she committed to help immigrants and expressed a desire to help improve the living conditions for immigrants. Landon, who insisted that immigrants obey the law in order to have inalienable rights, expressed empathy towards key events in Francisco's life such as losing his special *librito* and even hoped that Francisco would cross the border without getting caught. Landon expressed an internal conflict about where he stood with regard to extending help to Mexicans. After thinking aloud, he decided that he couldn't ignore the need to help them.

Visual Context and Responses

The visual aids used to create the context for the beginning of the book were also the context for "Under the Wire" and several other chapters. The images of the United States border, border patrol agents, families and passports were all elements that built a context for succeeding chapters.

When students responded to "Learning the Game," they made direct reference to the images and videos in the pre-reading activities. Such references included pesticides, heaters, heat stroke, physical exhaustion and strain on the knees from picking crops as well as perceived difficulty in being a farm worker and having "pity" on Francisco. Some went as far as to say they would "hate" being a *bracero*. When students expressed sadness and anger at the *contratista* fired Gabriel, they all referenced family and money, two key themes shown in the Prezi Power Point as reasons for immigration.

Likewise, students responded to Francisco's detainment in "Moving Still" with words such as "mad," "sad," "confused," and "not fair." Responses were linked directly to the images of the border and border patrol officers shown to introduce "Under the Wire." The video students watched describing the legal situation of DACA recipients showed young immigrants being detained for rolling a stop sign. Students made reference to the video with comments such as "immigrants work to provide for their families," "unfair," "immigrants shouldn't live in fear," "friends, home, and food," "they have the right to live where they want," "get a passport legally," "better life," "same amount of rights," "rights," and "live life freely." Facts and empathy were connected in the responses to this chapter.

Before reading "Soledad," students had the experience of seeing cotton bolls in a sack including thorns and shells. They had the opportunity of picking the cotton out of the shell and picking the seeds out of the soft cotton. In response, students said that picking cotton was harder than feeding a sick dog, all Francisco did for work was watch his brother, and cleaning a bathroom was similar to the hard work Francisco did. Perspective taking was noted.

Prior to reading "Inside Out," we used La Mariposa, the visual format of the chapter, to make predictions. Students made deep comparisons between the cocoon and the butterfly and Francisco's life in the following ways, "He's in captivity. He's alone," "The jar is like captivity," "The butterfly is like him opening up to the world," "It will turn out beautiful in the end," and "He finally gets used to his life in America, he is a butterfly."

Empathetic responses to the events in "Miracle in Tent City" were minimal even though the pre-reading context consisted of a video and several images about Catholicism. Referring to Francisco's spiritual experience students said, "It's a dream of religion or of faith" and

“...sometimes [the butterfly] is a symbol of hope. Have hope. He’ll be okay.” Students had already thought deeply about and seen images of butterflies in a previous chapter.

“El Angel de Oro” was introduced with only a couple of images of fish; however, the responses were both deep and empathetic. This was the first chapter for which students responded with general expressions of empathy. One student said

I think that the grey fish symbolize all the immigrants coming to America from Mexico and they are trying to survive but can’t, and the goldfish is what they want to be.

Another student mentioned

I think the little gray fish could symbolize his life like with all the hard things he’s been through. And that everything would soon get better. I felt bad since his friend was in his cabin/tent. I don’t think Panchito felt happy that his friend was gone.

Students were introduced to the chapter “Christmas Gift” with the picture book *The Christmas Gift*. In the book, pictures of the family buying only meat bones for their meal are shown. Students also watched a short video of Francisco tearing up as he recalled the sad Christmas. They made comments such as “It was generous,” “They didn’t have enough money,” “You can tell they’re poor,” “He was sad for his mom because she was crying,” and “I can actually relate to him.” Perspective taking and general empathy were present.

Although visual aids for “Death Forgiven” were limited, students responded with phrases such as “They had a huge affection,” “They were close,” “pretty depressed,” and “depressing story.” Such responses in reference to the death of the family parrot were descriptive in nature as well as general and perceptive. Visual representations of wages and *braceros* picking strawberries were used to introduce “Cotton Sack.” Students mentioned money and work as

factors for concern. Comments included “[Papa] needs the money” and “[Papa] is worried about putting food on the table.”

Few images were used to introduce “The Circuit” however, phrases recorded from students about the migratory nature of Francisco’s life included “so sad,” “He should be happy,” “I would feel really sad,” “really stressed,” “[Migrant farmworkers] lose their friends,” and “It’s probably hard for them to provide for their families.” General, descriptive and implied empathy were all present.

The visuals for the chapter “To Have and to Hold” were limited as well. Reactions were descriptive in nature and perspective taking was evident. Students commented with emotions such as “The most anxious part for me,” “The most sad thing would be,” “I would be real mad,” “I gasped and started crying,” “very sad,” “really depressed and heart-broken,” “I bet he felt devastated,” and “I would feel horrible.”

Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter has included the students’ responses to the Mexican-American narrative by Francisco Jiménez as recorded in pre-reading large group discussions, small group literature circles, journal responses, and interviews. Students responded in three main areas: literal/factual responses, empathetic responses, or deep interpretations of the text. There were slight differences in the responses recorded during the literature circle discussions because of the human interactions. These types included: perception of peer’s emotions, empathy blocked by lack of information, and student consciousness of own empathy or emotions.

Pre-reading discussions mainly included factual responses and deep understandings of cultural aspects. Literal responses were also a key part of the

literature discussions because it was intentional to have students discuss the background and factual information before discussing feelings and empathy. Students answered comprehension questions before questions that required interpretations or allowed for critical thinking in their literature circles. When students answered open-ended questions that required interpretation in literature circles, they responded with a wide variety of empathetic responses ranging from implied empathy to empathy that was connected to facts learned in the unit. Students also manifested a series of interactions in their small groups such as clarifying information, asking a question, encouraging discussion, expressing similar views, expressing opposing views, sharing similar ideas, and making reference to a peer's experience.

Interview responses gave insight into students' perspectives that were expressed during other parts of the study. Even though interview responses varied because of students' personalities or literacy level, they all expressed empathy, whether it was towards a tragic event in Francisco's life or towards a socio-political aspect in the context of the book.

Student responses to the visual context of the chapters varied. Some chapters included a wide variety of visual aids as the pre-reading context, but surprisingly few empathetic responses were recorded. Students responded to chapters with high visual content such as picture books with deep cultural understandings in some or general expressions of empathy in others. "Under the Wire," "Learning the Game," and "Moving Still" had similar visual aids that served as the visual context before reading and student responses to those chapters were similar to each other. Statement of facts linked with empathy was present in all three chapters.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will discuss the connections between the findings and the research questions. I will then discuss some pedagogical implications of the findings. Limitations of the study will be outlined and finally, recommendations for further research will be given.

Research Question 1: What is the nature of students' empathetic responses to a Mexican American narrative text when studied within its historical, social, and political context?

This study aimed to understand the detailed nature of students' empathetic responses to reading a Mexican American narrative within its historical, social, and political context.

Although previous research identified broad categories of empathy, this study was unique in the detailed responses that were collected and recorded within broader categories. The levels of empathy recorded in the natural course of reading a text give us insight as to the complexity and varied possibilities of student reactions. Students responded in varying degrees to the characters and their emotions indicating that the process of developing empathy can be just as varied and complex.

Previous studies investigating the use of realistic fiction, historical fiction, and nonfiction focused mainly on perspective taking; however, this study took into account the descriptive nature of empathetic responses when students were immersed in the historical context. It is possible that providing students with accurate information of different perspectives could have limited fallacies in thinking. Student responses seemed to be reflecting the accurate background information presented to them.

The pedagogical practices implemented in the study allowed students to react to aspects of the sociopolitical context in different forums. The context of the text was intertwined with the pedagogical practices of visual literacy, literature circles, written reflections, and one-on-one

interviews. The sociopolitical context and student interactions and reflections were inseparably connected; students used the background and context as a basis for discussions and reflections. Implementation of such pedagogical practices could have eliminated confusion about abstract ideas such as immigration, unfair working conditions, and poverty. The depth of the context also created clear examples from which students drew personal examples and comparisons.

Student familiarity with the contextual information appeared to influence empathetic responses. It seems as if familiarity with concepts such as a family pet, a favorite class at school, and fish allowed students to make connections and express empathy in deep ways. Similarly, creating the context for the cognitively demanding task of reading a culturally specific text, seemed to contribute to the deepening of empathetic responses (Cummins, 1984). Each chapter and its background appeared to serve as a mini-context for the succeeding chapters, creating a larger context as a resource for students as they reached the second half of the text. Empathetic responses for the second half of the book had greater variety and depth compared to the responses to the beginning of the text. Student responses seemed to be reflecting the context in broad overarching ways. In essence, providing familiar concepts as part of the background of the text might be considered a type of “comprehensible input,” possibly stimulating empathetic growth (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Students consistently responded with deep interpretations of the cultural or political situation of the chapter or book even though those responses were not necessarily empathetic in nature. Providing a context using a wide variety of tools and perspectives could have created an environment optimal for critical thinking or it could be that Ms. Hunt’s informal teaching of other cultures prior to the study prompted deep thinking about cultural issues. Such critical thinking may serve as a precursor for developing empathy in the future. Students' responses

showed that they were consistently analyzing and thinking deeply about issues that were presented as part of the historical and sociopolitical context. Again, it is difficult to assess how students would have responded in the absence of the instructional strategies used in this study. More research would be needed to draw more concrete conclusions about the nature of students' responses made within a rich historical environment.

Research Question 2: How do students' empathetic responses reflect information conveyed through the use of visual aids and current technologies in pre-reading activities?

Another focus of this study was how student responses to the Mexican American historical narrative would reflect visual aids and current technologies used in pre-reading activities. Previous studies confirmed that visual aids help eliminate misconceptions, promote discussion, and contribute to affective responses. This study looked at empathetic responses elicited in connection with the visual aids used for each chapter. It appears that the visual context created for the students during the course of the unit was reflected indirectly in the empathetic responses, possibly clarifying information that students referenced. Empathetic responses could also reflect students' literal perspectives formed of visual aids and images. As mentioned previously, students were shown an image of Francisco looking at the United States flag from the Mexican side of the border. This initial photo could have set the stage for students to place themselves in Francisco's circumstances as was reflected in many responses overall. The contextual support of visual images was also reflected in student responses (Cummins, 1984). By building on the visual aids used prior to each chapter, students had more information added to their background knowledge, a finding that seemed to be reflected in student responses.

Visual aids did not seem to foster empathetic responses if the topics discussed were too abstract for students or if students could not relate to the information. For example, "Miracle in

Tent City” was presented with a wide variety of visual tools including a video. Student responses were minimal, and though deep interpretations were made about the religious aspects of the chapter, little empathy was expressed. Students were able to take Francisco’s perspective, but the religious context and spiritual manifestations of “Miracle in Tent City” were abstract and unfamiliar. The concepts of the chapter were not mentioned in any way that showed any general, detailed, or explicit form of empathy. Further research specifically taking into account unfamiliar content would allow us to glean understanding in this area.

Likewise, even when visuals were used to present a chapter, empathetic responses seemed to reflect deep human suffering and commonplace topics more than visual elements. The wide and varied range of empathetic responses recorded for “Death Forgiven,” “The Circuit,” “To Have and to Hold,” and “Moving Still” could have been reflecting the events representative of general pain and human suffering present in those particular chapters. It is logical that students would respond in deep and detailed ways to the death of family pet, moving to a new home, not being able to take a favorite class at school, losing a home and precious items in a disaster, and deportation (separation from mom and family). The variety and depth of responses recorded for “Moving Still” were similar to the responses made in “Death Forgiven,” “The Circuit,” and “To Have and to Hold” possibly indicating deportation could have become a familiar enough topic during the course of the unit to enable empathetic processing. It could also be that current events about President Trump’s immigration policies prevalent in the news facilitated understanding of deportation, making it a familiar topic.

Research Question 3: How do students’ empathetic responses reflect discussion of literal information and background knowledge done in pre-reading and post-reading activities?

The last idea this study focused on was how student discussion of literal information and background knowledge was reflected in students' empathetic responses. This study took into account the literature circle as the main forum for discussing the book. Previously, the literature confirmed the human connections and trust built into literature circle discussions, but this study actually searched for empathetic comments and categorized them while taking into account the group interactions. Student responses seemed to reflect a safe environment for students to discuss events even when peers corrected erroneous, stereotypical, or misinformed ideas. Student responses also appeared to be reflecting a safe place for sharing vulnerable emotions. Lastly, it appears that student responses reflected a safe place for presenting and listening to opposing views, even if they weren't always empathetic views. It is difficult to assess how many or to what extent these practices were already in place before the study. Ms. Hunt, as mentioned previously, was consistent about instilling respect amongst her students. Principles of respect and trust also could have been developed over the course of the school year: this study was conducted in the latter part of the school year. Even if Ms. Hunt had established these classroom protocols previously, the discussion of the controversial topics presented in the study would have been natural.

It appears that journal responses could have also reflected clarifications made in small group discussions giving students correct information on which to base their responses. Discussing the context of the book as a large group and as small groups could have served as contextual support to facilitate expression of empathy in written journal entries and in the interviews. Talking about cultural elements and events could have clarified the book content in order for students to express themselves clearly. Talking about key topics in several pre-reading and post reading activities could have also allowed students to think through controversial ideas

before responding in writing or in an interview. Clear contextual information also appeared to help students respond accurately to the journal and interview prompts. Student expressions of empathy during the interviews seemed to be more evidence based than those presented in pre-reading discussions and in some aspects of literature circles. That is, students seemed confident in expressing knowledge that connected to their feelings about controversial topics. However, the responses in journals and interviews could have been reflecting the nature of the activity. It is not surprising for students to express a myriad of ideas with no time constraints to finish an assignment. Likewise, interviews were conducted away from peers where students did not have to worry about how their opinions might be received by peers. In addition, deeper expressions of empathy in journal and interview responses could also be attributed to the types of questions given to students for each. The pre-reading and small group discussions focused on more literal understandings. Although the variety of questions probably contributed to differences in the depth of responses between data sources, the differing questions would not account for differences in the depth of responses beginning of the book to the end of the book: responses increased in depth even within data sources.

It is important to note that all aspects of this study should be looked at as a whole. This study focused on the context, visual tools, and discussions and how they were reflected in empathetic responses. Students talked about the context because it was embedded in comprehension. The visual context was intricately connected to the historical and social background and set the tone for what students read and discussed. Students talked about their own experiences because they were given an opportunity to do so with peers whom they appeared to trust. The discussions seemed to provide clarity and solidified ideas. Talking about the events and context seemingly contributed to students' reactions as expressed in writing and in

one-on-one interviews. All aspects worked together to allow us to gather such detailed and varied responses.

Pedagogical Implications

The first obvious pedagogical implication would be for literacy educators to select multicultural literature with characters and storylines to which students can relate. One major factor reflected in the expression of empathy in this study was the student's ability to relate to the events and feelings experienced by Francisco. If educators are careful and considerate of their text selections, the text can be a powerful tool in helping students see themselves as similar to people of various cultural groups as opposed to different. A critical element to assess whether or not students are connecting to the characters and events in the book would be to keep an inventory of types of responses made by students. Using the categories presented in this study, educators could informally listen in on student discussion to understand to what extent students are connecting to the characters.

A second pedagogical implication would naturally follow the first. When teaching with a multicultural text, an intentional focus on creating a clear, detailed, and accurate background would likely allow students to focus on the characters' feelings rather on comprehension of abstract topics. It seems that by minimizing the cognitive demand, students are allowed to make connections that could enhance empathetic responses.

Next, it would be worthwhile for educators to take the time at the beginning of the school year or semester to teach students appropriate communication protocols when working with peers. These protocols are particularly important in classes where controversial or sensitive political issues are discussed. Teaching general principles of respect are commonplace; however, specific details about how to communicate about difficult topics could give students the

confidence to express their opinions as well as listen to those of others. Social studies, political science, history and language educators could include such training as part of the curriculum.

Limitations

Even though the unit counted as part of students' grade, students still missed class due to illness or other personal reasons. Sean was the only student who missed five days including the main introduction to the unit and book. Although Sean missed some pre-reading discussions, his recorded responses still indicated general empathy and perspective taking in Francisco's circumstances. There were fewer responses made by Sean overall compared to other students because of his absences, but the pre-reading and literature circle discussions he was present for still provided the information necessary for him to assess his feelings. Other students such as Mya, Claire and Richard, who missed a day or two expressed empathy in ways that took into account all aspects of the historical and social context. It is unlikely that being present on all days would have changed their responses.

Data Collection

A survey assessing cultural beliefs and attitudes was not administered at the beginning of the unit; however, as a class students did speak about attitudes and stereotypes in the first pre-reading discussion as well as in the post-interviews. Students also referenced personal attitudes and opinions throughout the discussions, informally. Although it would have been helpful to have a pre-and post-survey measuring attitudes and stereotypes, the literature circle discussions were able to show us the natural discourse students engage in when confronted with such stereotypes. Journal entries also gave us a different perspective of responses that were not written with a peer audience in mind that would warrant acceptance.

Additionally, not all students participated in the group discussions equally due to subject characteristics. I recorded comments made by more extroverted students in a large group, leaving little opportunity for introverted students. Likewise, some quieter students did not respond as frequently in literature circle discussions. Nevertheless, more introverted students were able to express themselves in the journal reflections. They were given another forum in which to contribute their ideas.

Finally, the self-reported information of the students interviewed may have been subject to exaggeration. At the beginning of the unit, I gave students some background information about my upbringing and immigrant parents. They were very aware that my parents came to the United States as teenagers. There is some possibility that student responses during the interview could have been exaggerated in order to please me as the researcher given my background. Despite this factor, responses of interviewed students were consistent with their comments made with their peers and in their journals.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on understanding the nature of empathy embedded in a rich cultural and visual context while giving students opportunities to talk about them. Having a view of varied responses indicated that the nature of empathy is more complex than it is simple. Among the responses of particular interest for future research would be students' awareness of their own emotions, empathies and perspectives. Awareness of empathy and perspectives could be a critical part of teaching empathy and also raises questions about its link to cultural understanding.

As seen in the individual interviews, both Claire and Landon expressed a social call of duty as a result of their learning. Claire emphatically stated her desire to help migrant

farmworkers find improved living conditions and health conditions. Landon expressed a moral desire to defend Mexicans. This unique extension of empathy is an area to consider. For instance, researchers could study the differences between students who are prompted to act on behalf of oppressed groups and those who simply express general empathy. In part, these differences may be attributed to personality traits, but a collection of student profiles accentuating these differences might give researchers further clues about empathetic development. A similar line of research might observe the transfer of students' desires to act and their transfer to real world situations. Outside of the classroom and over time, one could investigate connections between responses and real actions.

In this study, students reflected empathy for Francisco and his deportation circumstances. It would be beneficial to know whether or not empathetic responses to one cultural group are generalized to other cultural groups. By building on the results of this study, researchers could identify just how extensive students' empathies are. Such information could help educators' know just how specific or how extensive their units need to be in order to have an impact on students.

Finally, it appears as if talking about events, facts, and history helped students solidify their own personal views and possibly clarify misconceptions. In the group interactions a few empathetic interactions within the group were noted. A more in depth analysis of the human interactions that take place in literature circles as linked to empathetic responses would be beneficial. Perhaps a more detailed protocol measuring empathy within the group could be developed and implemented. Understanding whether or not empathy within peer groups impacts empathy towards characters then educators' efforts might change particularly during the digital age when interactions might lean more towards virtual and digital modes of communication.

Conclusion

The focus of the study was to gather detailed information regarding young learners' empathy as they read and discussed a historical narrative within a visually and historically rich learning environment. Specific categories of student responses evolved from a variety of data sources such as discussions, journal entries, and interviews. Reducing the cognitive demand of new information in visual format seemed to be reflected in the depth and progress of student responses from the beginning of the book to the end. It also appeared that student responses were reflecting the safe environment of literature circles, but the existing classroom environment before the study began could have also played a role. Familiar content seemed to be reflected in students' responses. More research aimed at understanding how student empathies transfer to real world situations and an in depth analysis of human interactions of literature circles would be purposeful on building on these findings. This study provided new awareness of the complex nature of empathetic responses of young learners and the critical role of minimizing the cognitive demand to help students reach deeper levels of empathy.

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Appendix A: Literature Circle Questions

Chapter: “Under the Wire”

1. Who is *la migra*? Why is it important to the family? Where is the *migra* today? What are they called?
2. Describe what the family will do for work here.
3. Describe where the family lives when they arrive in the U.S.
4. Why do you think the conductor leaves the brown bag for the boys?

Chapter: “Soledad”

1. Why is Francisco left alone in the car? Where is the rest of his family?
2. What is the family picking now?
3. Francisco tries to pick cotton while he’s waiting for his family. Describe why picking cotton was a difficult job. Why is Francisco disappointed after he stops picking cotton for the day? (p.12)
4. Describe an example of how much cotton you think 2 feet was.
5. Name and describe another group of people that had to pick cotton in U.S. history.

Chapter: “Inside Out”

1. Why was Roberto hit on the wrists in school? Do you think this was fair? Why or why not?
2. Francisco is starting school for the first time in January. What do you think it would be like to start school in the middle of the school year?
3. Imagine that you went to school in a place where nothing was taught in English—the teacher didn’t speak English and the majority of children didn’t know English. One child speaks English, but every time the two of you speak in English you are both scolded.

How would that make you feel? Would you like school? Do you think you would learn very much? Do you think it would make you feel like English was an important or good language to know?

4. What happens over the jacket that Mr. Sims give to Francisco? Do you think Curtis really wanted the jacket or do you think he just didn't want Francisco to have it? Does Curtis wear the jacket again? How do you think it made Francisco feel to be accused of stealing the coat when Mr. Sims gave it to him?

Chapter: "Miracle in Tent City"

1. Why is it called Tent City?
2. How would you describe the Jiménez family's life in Tent City? Think about where they lived and how they lived. Describe how you think it would be to live without a refrigerator or freezer.
3. What does *Papá* do to build a refrigerator to keep the food cold?
4. How does the family prepare the tent for the new baby?
5. When Torito becomes ill they can't take him to the hospital right away, why? What do *Mamá* and *Papá* tell the children they have to do in order to help Torito get well? Describe what happens to Torito.
6. Describe the relationship between Francisco's spiritual experience and the Catholic beliefs we discussed before this chapter.

Chapter: "El Angel de Oro"

1. What is "*el angel de oro*"?
2. Why is *Papá* so worried?
3. Francisco and Miguelito plan to make fishing poles. Explain what happens.

4. What does Francisco leave for his neighbor?
5. Why do you think Francisco lets the fishing rod float away?
6. What do you think happened to Miguelito?

Chapter: “Christmas Gift”

1. At the beginning of this chapter, where does the family go to get their food? What did the butcher do to help out the family?
2. How do we know that Francisco’s family doesn’t have much money?
3. How does Francisco feel when he doesn’t get what he hopes for on Christmas morning?
Use evidence from the book.
4. Why do you think that *Mamá* is crying at the end of the chapter?
5. How did you feel at the end of this chapter? Why?

Chapter: “Death Forgiven”

1. Who was *El Perico*?
2. Is Francisco close to *El Perico*? How do you know? Give examples from the story.
3. Why is *Papá* in a terrible mood? (p. 49)
4. What happens to *El Perico*? (p. 49) 6. How does Francisco feel after *El Perico* dies?

Chapter: “Cotton Sack”

1. How do they wear the cotton sacks as they pick cotton?
2. Why do you think *Papá* can’t sleep at night when it starts to rain? What is he worried about?
3. What wakes Francisco up on Saturday morning? What does this mean?
4. Why do you think *Papá* likes the sound of the honking car, even if he doesn’t like noise?
5. Describe the shell of the cotton boll.

6. How much cotton does the family pick in one day?
7. What are some of the challenges that farmworkers can have when picking cotton or another crop?

Chapter: “The Circuit”

1. After reading about Francisco’s first day working at the Sullivan’s’, why do you think he was dreading going to Fresno?
2. Why do the boys hide when the school bus drives by?
3. When does Francisco start school? When does Roberto start school? How can this be hard for Francisco and Roberto?
4. How do you think Francisco felt about Mr. Lema? Describe a teacher that you felt the same way about.
5. Francisco is very excited to get home and tell his parents about the good news that Mr. Lema is going to teach him how to play the trumpet. What happens when he arrives home? How do you think Francisco felt? How would you feel if you were Francisco?
6. What social or emotional challenges do you think children of migrant farmworkers had/have?

Chapter: “Learning the Game”

1. Why are Francisco’s classmates excited about summer? Why isn’t Francisco excited about summer? How would you feel if you had to spend your summer like Francisco?
2. Who works with Francisco’s family the first day? What do they learn about him during lunch?

3. Towards the end of the story, Gabriel and Francisco are loaned out to another farm contractor or *contratista*. Gabriel has a disagreement with this man—what is it over? What does the *contratista* ask Gabriel to do? What happens?
4. What does Francisco do as a result of what happened with Gabriel?

Chapter: “To Have and to Hold”

1. What two belongings are very important to Francisco?
2. Who gives Francisco the 1910 penny?
3. How is Carl’s home different from Francisco’s home?
4. Does Francisco ever get to show Carl his own collection? Explain.
5. What does Francisco put in his blue *librito*? Why is it so special to him?
6. Why does their house catch on fire? Do you think this was a risk for other field workers’ families? Why or why not?
7. Why do you think this chapter is called “To Have and to Hold”?

Chapter: “Moving Still”

1. What is Francisco’s first memory of *la migra*?
2. What happens if *la migra* does a raid of the labor camps? What happens today if *la migra* raids a place with undocumented workers?
3. Where is their temporary home?
4. Why does Francisco like Santa Maria so much?
5. What are the family’s living conditions like in the barracks?
6. Both Roberto and Francisco are very hopeful for the job at the shoe store, why? What would that job mean for them?
7. Roberto does end up getting a year-round job. What is it?

8. Who comes for Francisco at the beginning of Miss Ehlis class? What do you think this means?
9. How do you interpret the part of the Declaration of Independence that Panchito was memorizing?
10. What was your reaction when the migra came to get Panchito?
11. Do you think *la migra* could deport people from the United States and get people at school today? Explain.

Adapted from:

Dillon, K. (2012, October). *Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide: The Circuit*. University of New Mexico Latin American & Iberian Institute. Retrieved from <https://teachinglatinamericathroughliterature.files.wordpress.com>.

Appendix B: Journal Reflection Prompts by Chapter

Chapter: “Under the Wire”

1. Describe how you would feel if your family had to move to another country. What would you miss about your country?
2. How do you think Panchito and his family felt about leaving Mexico?

Chapter: “Soledad”

1. What is the hardest job you have ever done? Why was it hard? What feelings did you experience as you did the work? How do you think your experience is similar or different from Francisco’s?

Chapter: “Inside Out”

1. Write everything you know about cocoons.
2. Write everything you know about butterflies.
3. What do you think the cocoon could represent in Francisco’s life?
4. What do you think the butterfly could represent in Francisco’s life?

Chapter: “Miracle in Tent City”

1. Describe the experience that Panchito had when he was praying. How does this experience relate to the Catholic beliefs we discussed before reading the chapter?

Chapter: “El Angel de Oro”

1. Why do you think Francisco lets the fishing rod float away?
2. What happened to the little gray fish? What do YOU think the dying gray fish could symbolize? What could the goldfish symbolize?
3. How did you feel at the end of this chapter? Why?

Chapter: “Christmas Gift”

1. Did you ever have a Christmas when you didn’t get what you wanted? Was it the same or different as Francisco’s experience? Explain why it was the same or why it was different.
2. How did you feel at the end of this chapter? Why?

Chapter: “Death Forgiven”

1. Describe how you felt when *Perico* died.
2. Have you ever lost a pet? Explain.
3. Describe how Francisco felt when *Perico* died.

Chapter: “Cotton Sack”

1. Describe what you think it would be like to pick cotton for hours in one day. Would you like it? Why or why not?
2. What fruit, vegetable, or plant would you prefer to pick? Why?
3. Describe how the fruits and vegetables get from the ground to your local grocery store.

Chapter: “The Circuit”

1. Francisco is very excited to get home and tell his parents about the good news that Mr. Lema is going to teach him how to play the trumpet. What happens when he arrives home? How do you think Francisco felt? How would you feel if you were Francisco? What do you think are some social or emotional challenges of migrant children?

Chapter: “Learning the Game”

1. Why are Francisco’s classmates excited about summer?
2. Why ISN’T Francisco excited about summer?
3. How would you feel if you had to spend your summer like Francisco?

4. Gabriel earned and sent money home to his family in Mexico like many Mexicans today.
What were your feelings when Gabriel was fired?

Chapter: “To Have and to Hold”

1. How did you feel when Francisco found out his *librito* had burned in the fire?
2. How would you feel if one of your precious possessions was lost in a fire?

Chapter: “Moving Still”

1. Explain what this means. What did it mean for Panchito? What does it mean for other immigrants? “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”
2. Do you think it was fair for the *migra* to come and get Francisco and Roberto? Explain.

Adapted from:

Dillon, K. (2012, October). *Vamos a Leer Educator’s Guide: The Circuit*. University of New Mexico Latin American & Iberian Institute. Retrieved from <https://teachinglatinamericathroughliterature.files.wordpress.com>.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What did you think of _____ (researcher will insert name of character) in the book *The Circuit*?
2. Did you ever feel happy for _____ (researcher will insert name of character) in the book *The Circuit*? If so, why? When?
3. Did you ever feel sad for _____ (researcher will insert name of character) in the book *The Circuit*? If so, why? When?
4. Is there a character in the book that you felt most similar to? If so, who? Explain.
5. Is there a character in the book that you felt different from? If so, who? Explain.
6. Can you tell me more about what you said during your group discussion when you were talking about _____ (researcher will reference student comment during group discussion)?
7. Can you tell me more about what you wrote in your journal when the class wrote about _____ (researcher will reference specific journal topic)?
8. Did your opinion of other cultures change while you read *The Circuit*? If so, how?
9. Do you think the historical information and visual aids I used to teach *The Circuit* helped you be more understanding of people that immigrate to the United States? If so, how?
10. How do you think people can be more understanding of people like Panchito?